Elite women and the West End town house: creating, maintaining and inhabiting a residence in London, c.1710-c.1750

Elite Women and the West End Town House:

Creating, Maintaining and Inhabiting a Residence in London, *c.*1710–*c.*1750

In Two Volumes

Volume One: Text

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree.

Abstract

This dissertation examines the relationship between elite women and the London West End town house during the first half of the eighteenth century. To date, the town house has attracted far less scholarly attention than the country house, meaning that the important roles of women as patrons, owners and inhabitants of this building type have been substantially overlooked. Drawing on an extensive range of previously unexplored archival material, this thesis takes a significant step towards redressing this neglect. In addition to exploring women's roles in the design, construction and decoration of their London residences, it also evaluates the extent to which the town house facilitated their participation in social, familial and cultural exchange in the capital.

The first two chapters adopt a biographical approach, contextualising the construction of two architecturally significant houses within the lives of their female patrons. Chapter one focuses on Marlborough House on Pall Mall built by Christopher Wren for Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (1660-1744), whilst chapter two examines 16 Arlington Street built by James Gibbs for Mary, 8th Duchess of Norfolk (1692-1754). Chapters three and four broaden the lens to examine the experiences of female residents in two contrasting neighbourhoods. First, the thesis turns to the Whitehall area, where various houses were built on the site of the ruined palace. Second, it looks at the Burlington estate, a new development built on land lying to the north of Burlington House on Piccadilly. The final chapter takes a cross-generational approach to a study of 5 St James's Square, looking at the various roles of three women of the Wentworth family in relation to the property.

As this research reveals, studying the experiences of elite eighteenth-century women greatly enriches our understanding of the significance of the West End town house and its place in early Georgian history.

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This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Diana Paul (1938-2001), who first inspired my interest in women's history.

Notes to the Reader

Dates mentioned, before the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar in 1752, are given in the Old Style as they appear in the original source, except that the year is taken to begin on 1 January.

When quoting from primary sources, eighteenth-century orthography has been retained.

Abbreviations

ACM	Arundel Castle Manuscripts
BL	British Library
ESRO	East Sussex Record Office
HRO	Hertfordshire Record Office
LMA	London Metropolitan Archive
LRO	Lancashire Record Office
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
SCA	City of Sheffield Archive
SoL	*Survey of London* — all footnote references to the *Survey* give the volume and page number only. Full details of each volume can be found in the bibliography.
TNA	The National Archive
WWM	Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments

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Introduction

On 5 January 1761, Lady Isabella Finch (1700-71) sent the Prime Minister, Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle (1693-1768), an invitation to an assembly at her house in Berkeley Square, London:

> La[dy] Isab[ella] Finch's compliments to the Duke of Newcastle & desires ye favour of his Grace's company to Night & will take no excuse for she has a numerous assembly. Berkeley Square, Monday past 4 o'clock.
>
> NB La[dy] Isa[bella] F[inch] is sure his Grace will be received by the Top of ye Company & in all appearance by the Mistress of the House, tho she has great Reason to be very angry with his Grace.[1]

Isabella's insistence that she would 'take no excuse' in reply and her feigned anger over an unexplained misdemeanour on the Duke's part points to the strong familiarity between these two long-term friends and political allies. However, despite her witty idiom, it is striking that she describes herself as the 'Mistress of the House' as a means of asserting her authority. The house in question, 44 Berkeley Square, was undoubtedly a great source of pride to Isabella and, consequently, an important aspect of her identity. At the time of writing this note, she had owned this small-scale but magnificent terraced house for sixteen years, its sumptuous interior providing her with an impressive setting for entertaining at the very highest level. Designed and built by the architect, William Kent, between 1742 and 1746, it was a masterpiece of architectural ingenuity, especially on account of its spatially complex staircase characterised by the subtle interplay of semi-circular forms. This rose the full height of the building and spanned almost its entire width, confounding the expectations of the

[1] BL Add MS 22067, f.254, Isabella Finch to Duke of Newcastle, 5 January 1761.

visitor (fig.i.1). The house also boasted a splendid saloon on the first floor, crowned by a richly moulded and gilded ceiling, its coffers decorated with colourful cameos (fig.i.2).

One of the twelve surviving children of Daniel Finch, the Earl of Nottingham, Isabella had been born into an aristocratic and politically influential family.[2] Little information has survived concerning the first thirty years of her life but, in May 1730, she was appointed Lady of the Bedchamber to the three eldest daughters of George II. This position (which she had attained with the assistance of her relative, Dorothy, Lady Burlington) helped her to acquire a position of financial independence as well as connections with many of the leading social and political figures of her generation. Isabella never married but her biological family remained very important to her throughout her life and she strongly believed in the important role of women in upholding the family's honour and reputation. Writing to her brother-in-law in July 1744 she declared that 'the women of the Finch family had been the credit and indeed the support of it […] by the figure they had made in the world and the service they had done the brothers by having married people of fortune and interest who had brought them into Parliament.'[3] Ownership of a magnificent town house, which she often referred to as her 'castle', greatly facilitated her own role as a society hostess, enabling her to promote the interests of both her family and her political allies.[4]

It is fortunate that Isabella left a rich archival trail, her letters surviving in collections at the British Library, the Sheffield City Archive and Chatsworth House.

[2] Daniel Finch, 2nd Earl of Nottingham and 7th Earl of Winchilsea (1647-1730) served as Secretary of State under Queen Anne and Lord President of the Council under George I.

[3] SCA WWM/M2/161, Isabella Finch to Lord Malton, 7 July 1744.

[4] See, for example, SCA WWM/M2/220, Isabella Finch to Lord Malton, 5 September 1745.

Not only do these letters show her to have been a well-connected, politically engaged member of London society, but they also reveal that she had a strong friendship with William Kent, and that she took particular delight in the house's innovative design. Whilst the building was under construction, Isabella wrote to her brother-in-law: 'My house begins to show out to the admiration of all who see it who could not comprehend ye plan till ye stair case was up. Now they begin to understand ye joke'.[5] A few months later, when the house was nearing completion, she wrote to her half-niece, Lady Burlington, expressing concern that 'ye Stair-Case be completely adorned and beautified according to ye Signor's [Kent's] Plan without regard to expense'.[6]

Despite this, most twentieth-century historians have been less than generous in their assessment of Isabella and her role as an architectural patron. In 1985, Christopher Sykes questioned why 'a middle-aged spinster of noble birth and uncertain means' had required such 'a Palladian jewel'. Relying heavily on the waspish wit of Horace Walpole, he went on to describe Isabella's entertainments at the house as 'inclined to be dull affairs, mostly small card parties', frequented by 'Lady Bel and her gossipy cronies, […] pushing cards gloomily round a table'.[7] Meanwhile, in 2004, John Cornforth described 44 Berkeley Square as 'one of the puzzles' of London architecture since no-one could explain how 'a woman of apparently limited means and unremarkable looks in her mid-forties' could have been its patron.[8] And, one of

[5] SCA WWM/M8/88, Lady Isabella to Lord Rockingham, n.d. [1743]. This case study formed the subject of my MA dissertation, completed in 2016: J. Learmouth, 'The London Town House of Lady Isabella Finch' (MA diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 2016). It was subsequently adapted for an article in the *Georgian Group Journal*: J. Learmouth, 'The London Town House of Lady Isabella Finch', *Georgian Group Journal*, 25 (2017), pp.73-94.

[6] Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS, CS1/219.17: Lady Isabella Finch to Lady Burlington, 28 August 1744.

[7] C. Sykes, *Private Palaces: Life in the Great London Houses* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1985), p.111.

[8] J. Cornforth, *London Interiors from the Archive of Country Life* (London: Aurum Press, 2009), p.82.

Kent's biographers, Michael Wilson, even questioned whether Isabella had fully appreciated her house on account of her 'somewhat staid disposition.'[9]

These remarks reveal long established prejudices about elite women as both architectural patrons and society hostesses. In assessing 44 Berkeley Square, Skyes and Cornforth evidently found it puzzling that an unmarried woman should commission a leading architect to build her an elaborate and stylistically significant town house, assuming that she would have had little occasion to make proper use of it. It is only through close scrutiny of Isabella's personal correspondence that a more accurate and nuanced picture of her life, ambitions and motivations begins to emerge, and consequently a fuller understanding of her relationship with the house. The discovery of such a wealth of valuable, unpublished material relating to a single case study inspired me to investigate the relationship between elite women and town houses of the period more extensively. Several revealing, but previously unexamined, examples soon came to light, showing that Isabella's attachment to her town house was far from unusual.

Although there has been a growing body of scholarship on the relationship between women and architecture in recent years, such work has focused primarily on women's roles in relation to the country house. Scholarship on women and the town house remains strikingly scarce.[10] In her 2009 study, *The Town House in Georgian*

[9] M. Wilson, *William Kent: Architect, Designer, Painter, Gardner, 1685-1748* (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1984), p.229.

[10] Example of literature relating to women and the country house include: D. Arnold, 'Defining femininity: Women and the Country House' in D. Arnold, ed. *Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2013); J. Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (April 2009), pp.336-63; R. Baird, *Mistress of the House: Great Ladies and Grand Houses 1670-1830*,

London, one of the few substantive publications in this field, Rachel Stewart noted that women had an 'especially strong association' with both the West End and the town house during the Georgian era, flagging this a particularly fertile area of research.[11] Responding to this call, this thesis firstly assesses women's agency in relation to architecture and interior décor by examining their involvement in the construction and design of town houses. Secondly, but equally importantly, it evaluates the town house's significance in the broader context of women's lives by exploring what motivated them to purchase or commission these properties, what functions these houses performed, and why women often chose to reside in London in preference to living on the country estate. My thesis thus combines methodologies related to both architectural and social history so that this under-researched building type can be reassessed from the perspective of the female patron or resident. Its overarching aim is to answer two reciprocal questions. What can the experiences of elite women tell us about the design, construction, use and perception of the West End town house in London during this period? And, conversely, what can the West End town house tell us about the lives and roles of those elite women?

The majority of women focused on in this study were members of the aristocracy.[12] Some were born into the nobility, whilst others achieved status through

(London, 2003); A. Boyington, 'Maids, Wives and Widows: Female Architectural Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Britain,' (unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge, 2017).

[11] R. Stewart, *The Town House in Georgian London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p.27 and p.110.

[12] Most scholars of women's history opt for the label, 'elite women' to denote women belonging to the upper echelons of society. See E. Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c. 1754-1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); J. Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (April 2009), pp.336-63; R. Wilson, *Elite Women in Ascendancy Ireland, 1690-1745* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015).

dynastic marriage. The first two chapters both focus on duchesses, their rank placing them in the very highest echelon of society. Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough (1660-1744), owed her title to her husband's newly created dukedom, whilst Mary Howard, 8th Duchess of Norfolk (1692-1754), married the holder of the country's oldest dukedom. Countesses also feature prominently in this thesis, including Jane Bentinck, Countess of Portland (1672-1751) (chapter 3); Dorothy Boyle, Countess of Burlington (1699-1758) (chapter 4), and Anne Wentworth, Countess of Strafford (*c*.1684-1754) (chapter 5). There are also a number of women included who had no formal title, but were connected to noble figures through kinship or marriage. Elizabeth Dunch (1685-1761), referred to as Mrs Dunch, for example, was the niece of the Duke of Marlborough (chapter 3). Lavinia Fenton (1710-60), meanwhile, a woman born into the lower ranks of society, became accepted into the social elite owing to her successful career as an actress and mistress of the wealthy aristocrat, the Duke of Bolton (chapter 4).

In the context of this thesis, the term 'elite' is preferred to 'aristocratic' since it engages with the fact that acceptance into high society was based on a combination of factors connected with wealth and rank.[13] The women discussed here also enjoyed a level of social eminence and their activities were often commented on in the daily newspapers. However, it is worth noting that the term 'elite' was rarely used by eighteenth-century writers. Instead, they employed a variety of terms including 'the nobility', 'the quality', or 'persons of distinction' to describe the upper echelons of

[13] According to its dictionary definition, elite denotes 'a group or class of people seen as having the most power and influence in a society, especially on account of their wealth or privilege.' 'elite, n.2 and adj', *OED Online*. https://www.oed.com [accessed 17 December 2020].

society.[14] Whilst there is considerable overlap between the social status of the women discussed in this study and the fashionable members of society described by Hannah Greig in *The Beau Monde*, the women considered here were not necessarily leaders of fashion.[15] Some of them, particularly ladies such as Jane Bentinck, Countess of Portland, were more concerned with upholding tradition and maintaining the hegemony of the aristocracy, than with fashionable life.

The West End

This thesis focuses on the elite residential district of London that lay between Holborn in the east and Hyde Park in the west, also encompassing the parliamentary buildings at Westminster, the royal court at St James's, and the theatres and opera houses around Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Although this area boasted a high concentration of titled and wealthy residents, it is important to note that such people represented, of course, a tiny minority of London's overall population – as little as two or three percent.[16] Even in the West End, there were pockets of poverty in each parish, many of which included workhouses or charity schools.[17] During the eighteenth century, this area was generally referred to as 'the town' to differentiate it from the older, mercantile 'city' in the east.[18] However, given the potential confusion surrounding the

[14] As noted by Ingrid Tague, 'one demonstrated one's membership in the Quality by knowing how to act in social situations, by revealing taste and gentility.' I. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), p.13.

[15] H. Greig, *Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.19-20.

[16] Old Bailey Online: https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/London-life18th.jsp#population.

[17] S. O'Connell, *London 1753* (London: British Museum Press, 2003), p.145. See, for example, discussion of Burlington Girls' School in chapter 4.

[18] Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.10.

label ‘the town’, I have chosen to use ‘West End’ instead.[19] This term was not widely employed until the 1800s, but the area which it describes was already a developing reality during the early eighteenth century.

In delineating the geographical area covered by this thesis, it is useful to turn to the account of a contemporary travel writer, Baron de Pollnitz, who recorded his visit to London in 1733. His description gives a vivid impression of London’s West End as it appeared during the early years of George II’s reign. Having visited the city in the east, De Pollitz took a trip along the River Thames to reach what he described as ‘the St James’s End of the Town, where the King and most of the nobility reside’ (fig.i.3).[20] Disembarking at Whitehall stairs, ‘the common Landing-place for People that come out of the City by Water’, he advanced across the site of the former Palace (an area discussed in chapter 3), its buildings now ‘in the Hands of private Owners’, pausing to admire the ‘magnificent’ Banqueting House.[21] To the south of Whitehall, also overlooking the river, stood the Palace of Westminster, dedicated to ‘the Assembly of the Parliament’. St James’s Park extended to the west, with the palace of St James’s located on its northern flank. De Pollnitz observed various fine Houses that opened on to the park, singling out Marlborough House, the subject of chapter 1, and Buckingham House as ‘the most considerable’.[22] He admired the long, grand walk, known as ‘the Mall’ which ran from west to east across the northern boundary of the park, noting that it was ‘full of People every hour of the Day’, the ‘Ladies and

[19] See also S. Bradley and N. Pevsner, *London 6: Westminster* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003), p.1.

[20] Baron De Pollnitz, *The memoirs of Charles-Lewis, Baron de Pollnitz*, 2 vols (London, 1739), vol. 2, p.435.

[21] The Banqueting House had survived the fire of 1698 which had destroyed the principal palace apartments.

[22] De Pollnitz, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p.437.

Gentlemen' always appearing in 'rich dresses'.[23] De Pollnitz did not attempt a full description of the rapidly expanding residential estates to the north of St James's Park. He did, however, draw attention to the 'regularly built' character of the quarter with its 'strait, broad and airy' streets. He also noted the abundance of 'great and fine Squares', including St James's Square, the focus of chapter 5, which he described as 'the most considerable in London, not only for its Bigness, but for the Residence of Persons of the greatest Quality'. The newly completed Grosvenor Square, meanwhile, could boast even 'more magnificent' houses.[24]

As is clear from his description, by the time that Baron de Pollnitz visited in 1733, the West End of London was already firmly established as the main centre of activity for the elite. Its creation is generally considered to date from the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, although the history of Westminster and the surrounding area dates back considerably earlier.[25] To take the story up in the early sixteenth century, Henry VIII acquired York Place, the grand residence of Cardinal Wolsey, around 1530, and set about extending and converting it into the Royal Palace of Whitehall. At the same time, St James's Park was established as the King's hunting ground, whilst the Hospital of St James's, on its northern side, was rebuilt and converted into a residence intended for the Prince of Wales (later known as St James's Palace). Although the vast palace of Whitehall provided lodgings for many royal courtiers, the area around Westminster continued to expand throughout the seventeenth century.[26]

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[23] *Ibid*., p.436.

[24] *Ibid*., p.438.

[25] Ever since Edward the Confessor built the first royal residence next to Westminster Abbey in the eleventh century, the area has had a strong association with royalty. For a full overview of Westminster's history, see J. Schofield and S. Bradley, 'Introduction', Bradley and Pevsner, *London 6: Westminste*r, pp.1-43.

[26] See J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp.2-5.

Between 1629 and 1637, London's first square was laid out at Covent Garden, designed by Inigo Jones. Soon after the Reformation in 1660, this early essay in urban planning was followed by the creation of Bloomsbury Square (by Thomas Wriothesley, 4th Earl of Southampton) and St James's Square (the brainchild of Henry Jermyn, Earl of St Albans) from around 1665 onwards. Meanwhile, the construction of several significant palatial houses took place, including Burlington House (discussed in chapter 4) and Clarendon House on Piccadilly, both constructed in the mid-1660s. Following the great fire of 1666, the demand for housing in London's West End accelerated, prompting the Earl of St Albans to increase the number of houses in St James's Square from eleven to twenty-two. Henry Bennett, 1st Earl of Arlington, also responded to this demand by creating Arlington Street on a strip of his land which had originally formed part of Green Park in 1683. This later became the location of the dowager Duchess of Norfolk's house, discussed in chapter 2. During Queen Anne's reign, a period more renowned for its church building than for housing developments, the great mansions of Buckingham House (1702-05) and Marlborough House (1709-11) were constructed, both on the royal land of St James's Park.

It was, however, the early Hanoverian period which witnessed the most rapid expansion to the north of Piccadilly. A comparison between maps of 1707 and 1746 clearly reveals the significant change in the shape of the West End during this period (figs i.4 and i.5). It witnessed the construction of Hanover Square (from 1717), Berkeley Square (from *c.*1738), and the Ten Acre Close, or Burlington estate (1719-36; this last providing the subject matter for chapter 4). Significantly, two of the largest estates owed their existence to the fortune of wealthy heiresses. When the twelve-year old Mary Davies had married the Cheshire baronet, Sir Thomas Grosvenor, in 1677, she had brought with her an inheritance of five hundred acres of meadow and pasture

land in Westminster, a large proportion of which was developed to create the Grosvenor estate (1725-31), centred on the eight-acre Grosvenor Square.[27] Likewise, when Henrietta Cavendish Holles (1694-1755) had become the wife of Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford, in 1713, her dowry had included a large area of land north of Oxford Street. This was developed to form the Cavendish-Harley estate, its nucleus located in Cavendish Square (from 1717).[28] The rapid expansion of the West End led Mary Pendarves to complain in 1736: 'This town is grown to such an enormous size, that above half the day must be spent in the streets, going from one place to another.'[29]

Periodisation

The first half of the eighteenth century was thus a rich phase in London's development. Such expansion was linked to a considerable growth in population. In 1700, the overall number of inhabitants is estimated to have been 'less than 600,000' but, by 1750, it had grown to approximately 675,000.[30] The population of the West End represented a little over twenty percent of this figure, but the number of residents fluctuated depending on the time of year.[31] During the parliamentary season, which ran from

[27] Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.94.

[28] *Ibid*., p.97.

[29] Llanover, ed., *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delany … [etc.]* (London: R. Bentley, 1861) vol.1, p.554: Mrs Pendarves to Dr Swift, 22 April 1736.

[30] Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.8. Prior to the introduction of the first official census in 1801, it is difficult to estimate the population with any accuracy. As noted by Vanessa Harding, statistical estimates vary since potential sources of information are numerous and fragmented. V. Harding, 'The Population of London, 1550-1700: a review of the published evidence', *London Journal*, 15:2 (1990), pp.111-28.

[31] Between 1700 and 1800, the population of Westminster grew from around 130,000 inhabitants in 1700 to around 165,000. Meanwhile, the city's population actually declined from 208,000 to 134,000 in

autumn to Easter, the ruling classes descended on the capital but, over the summer months, they tended to retreat to the countryside to spend time on their estates.[32] A significant proportion of these elite inhabitants were wealthy women, including female courtiers, the wives of politicians and financially independent widows. It seems from sources such as correspondence and journals that many of these women enjoyed the opportunity to participate in elite urban life. To return to De Pollnitz's account, he was struck by the large number of ladies to be found in the fashionable spaces of the West End, including the public walks, the concert halls and theatres. Such women also found amusement in giving and receiving 'visits' and going 'often to Court, to have the pleasure of being seen'. He concluded: 'the women here enjoy great Liberty. They take the Air very much on Horseback. In short, they do what they have a mind to'.[33]

This significant period in London's expansion in part underpins the four decades focused on in this thesis: *c.*1710 to *c.*1750. This limited time frame also has the advantage of both facilitating a comparative approach to my case studies, and allowing a sufficiently detailed and nuanced discussion of the material. However, perhaps above all, this period is significant as one of considerable political, social and cultural change. Major developments in the early eighteenth century were to have a profound impact on the lives of both men and women inhabiting the capital. [34] My designated period opens during the final years of the Wars of the Spanish Succession, leading to the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. At this time, some elite wives remained in the

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the same period. R. Pearson, *Insuring the Industrial Revolution: Fire Insurance in Great Britain, 1700-1850* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p.57.

[32] See Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.6.

[33] De Pollnitz, *Memoirs,* vol.2, p.461.

[34] J. Black, *A System of Ambition: British Foreign Policy, 1660-1793* (London: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 2000).

capital whilst their husbands were employed on either military or diplomatic service on the continent. These included Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and Anne, Countess of Strafford, who both devoted their energy to setting up grand residences in London in the absence of their husbands. The early eighteenth century also witnessed increasing divisions between members of the aristocracy according to political affiliation. As noted by Greig, women often had the opportunity to participate in politics, albeit in an informal fashion, since assemblies, visits, balls and marriages could signal 'new connections and the bolstering of established factional alliances.'[35] The early Hanoverian period was also characterised by major rifts in the royal family. In 1717, the quarrel between George I and his son resulted in the establishment of a rival court at Leicester House. This was replicated in the following generation when George II banned Prince Frederick from St James's Palace, obliging him to take up residence in the 9th Duke and Duchess of Norfolk's house in St James's Square.[36] These events had a direct impact on London's high society, since male and female courtiers were obliged to choose between these courts during periods of conflict.

Although this early Hanoverian period was relatively peaceful, with no major wars breaking out until the War of the Austrian Succession in 1740, the new monarchy and government were constantly on their guard against attempts to restore the Stuart dynasty to the British throne. Jacobite uprisings occurred in both 1715 and 1719, and, in 1722, a group of Tory peers was arrested for their involvement in another Jacobite conspiracy: the Atterbury Plot.[37] The celebrated rebellion of 1745 was the last of such

[35] Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.135.

[36] H. Smith, *Georgian Monarchy: Politics and Culture, 1714-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.199-202.

[37] D. Szechi, *The Jacobites: Britain and Europe, 1688-1788* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

attempts, but it constituted a very real threat to the lives of elite Londoners, frequently commented on in the correspondence of the period.[38] For example, just after her house was completed in September 1745, Lady Isabella Finch wrote: 'I shall be devilish mad to have [my house] demolished or taken by a Scotch or French Dog'.[39] Moreover, some members of the nobility appear to have persisted in their loyalty to the exiled Stuarts whilst simultaneously participating in the elite society of Hanoverian London. One such figure (discussed in chapter 2) was Mary, 8th Duchess of Norfolk, who lived in St James's Square during her marriage, but commissioned James Gibbs to build her a house in Arlington Street after she became a widow.

The first half of the century also brought new opportunities for elite women. For those able to enjoy a degree of financial independence, especially wealthy widows, the beginnings of the stock market gave them the chance to engage in investment schemes.[40] Meanwhile, there was a burgeoning of cultural activity in the West End, providing myriad entertainments for women of fashion to enjoy. The Haymarket Opera House (renamed the King's Theatre in 1714), designed by John Vanbrugh, had opened its doors in 1705. From 1717, it also provided the venue for public masquerades held on a weekly basis throughout the 1720s and 30s, orchestrated by the impresario, John James Heidegger.[41] In 1732, Covent Garden Theatre was opened by the actor-manager, John Rich, accommodating over one thousand spectators. However, musical and

[38] J. Riding, *Jacobites: A New History of the '45 Rebellion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

[39] SCA WWM/M2/220: Isabella Finch to Lord Malton, September 1745.

[40] S. Staves, '"Investments, Votes, and 'Bribes": Women as Shareholders in the Chartered National Companies' in H. Smith, ed. *Women Writers and the Earl Modern British Political Tradition* (Cambridge, 1998), pp.259-78; Tague, *Women of Quality*, p.212.

[41] T. Castle, 'Eros and Liberty at the English Masquerade, 1710-1790', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 17:2 (Winter 1983-84), pp.156-76. M. Kobza, 'Dazzling or Fantastically Dull? Re-Examining the Eighteenth-Century London Masquerade', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 43:2 (2020): pp.161-81.

theatrical entertainments were not only confined to commercial venues. They were also staged in town houses, including those explored in this thesis. For example, Juliana Boyle, Countess of Burlington (1672-1750), arranged for several works by George Frederick Handel to be performed at Burlington House, including his opera, *Sulla*, in 1713. Similarly, Catherine Sheffield, Duchess of Buckingham, staged performances of two plays written by her husband, *Julius Caesar* and *Marcus Brutus* at Buckingham House for her son's seventh birthday on 10 January 1723.[42] The Duchess of Queensberry is known to have installed 'a small theatre' in her house in Burlington Gardens during the 1740s for the performance of amateur theatricals, discussed in chapter 4.[43] Meanwhile, the 8th Duke and Duchess of Norfolk hosted weekly masquerades for the nobility at their house in St James's Square between 1720 and 1730, after which their guests would proceed to the Haymarket to attend the public masquerade. The culture of town houses was thus very much part of London's expanding world of elite entertainments in this period. Not only did these houses provide convenient bases from which women could visit new commercial spaces; they also offered their own environments in which to host and enjoy such diversions.

Historiography and Methodology

This section considers the two most important fields of scholarship with which my thesis engages: the history of the London town house, and the history of elite women in eighteenth-century Britain. Despite the rich history of the early eighteenth century,

[42] J. Hone 'Pope, Bathurst and the Duchess of Buckingham', *Studies in Philology*, 115:2 (Spring 2018), pp.397-416.

[43] See J. Haugen 'The Mimic Stage: Private Theatricals in Georgian Britain' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Colorado, 2014), pp.134-40.

as outlined above, scholars working in both fields have paid limited attention to these decades, preferring instead to focus on the later Georgian period.[44] The only two major studies of the Georgian London town house to have appeared in recent years focus on the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: Rachel Stewart's *The Town House in Georgian London* examines the first thirty years of George III's reign, *c*.1760 to *c*.1790, whilst Susanna Avery-Quash and Kate Retford's edited volume covers a seventy year period between 1750 and 1820.[45] In women's history, the early Hanoverian period has likewise been relatively under-researched. Even publications that purport to discuss women throughout the eighteenth century, or the 'Georgian period' as a whole, focus primarily on the decades from 1760 onwards.[46]

The following discussions of the historiography of the London town house, and the historiography of elite women, are not intended to be surveys *per se*, nor straightforward summaries. Rather, they offer a brief overview of the pertinent fields, in order to draw out the major themes, concerns and scholarly approaches which have been most important in developing my own methodology. That methodology will thus be drawn out and elucidated through the historiographical discussion. These overviews also serve to identify key problems or omissions in the scholarship which have helped to focus my attention on particular women, houses and issues in the thesis. (Relevant

[44] The *Court, Country, City: British Art 1660-1735* research project, launched in October 2009, was conceived as a way of redressing the relative neglect of late Stuart/early Georgian British art. https://www.york.ac.uk/history-of-art/court-country-city//#tab-2

[45] S. Avery-Quash and K. Retford, eds, *The Georgian London Town House: Building, Collecting and Display* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019).

[46] This point is also made by Ingrid Tague, one of the few feminist historians to have focused on this period: Tague, *Women of Quality*, p.7. See also A. Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p.6.

aspects of these historiographies will also be discussed in greater depth in each chapter, as and when necessary).

The London town house

It is worth reiterating that scholarship on the town house relative to the country house, is notably scarce. As noted by Kate Retford, the country house is 'far more deeply embedded in the national consciousness' than its London counterpart, in part because of its prevalence and significance in fiction, films and television.[47] Furthermore, whilst the relatively substantial survival of country houses has contributed to their appeal, many eighteenth-century town houses have either been demolished or remodelled beyond recognition, rendering them both more elusive and more complex to study.[48]

The earliest comprehensive survey of eighteenth-century architecture in London was John Summerson's seminal *Georgian London* (1945) which traced the city's architectural development from the great Fire of 1666 through to the early nineteenth century. This work, which has undergone three substantial revisions, has provided historians from the mid-twentieth century onwards with a starting point for discussion and debate.[49] In keeping with methodologies dominant at the time, Summerson tended to privilege exteriors over interiors, and architects and builders over patrons. He made architectural style and innovation the major focus of his study,

[47] Retford, 'Introduction', Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*, p.4.

[48] Joseph Friedman and Susannah Brooke have also drawn attention to the disproportionate attention paid to the country house in comparison with the town dwelling. See J. Friedman, *Spencer House: Chronicle of a Great London Mansion* (London: Zwemmer, 1993), p.18; S. Brooke, 'Private Art Collections and London town houses', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2013), p.5. Despite the more widespread destruction of the town house overall, it is worth noting that several of England's country houses have also been lost since 1800. See 'Lost heritage: A Memorial to England's lost country houses', http://www.lostheritage.org.uk/

[49] The latest of these revised versions was published in 1988.

stressing the paramount importance of Anglo-Palladianism in the development of London's architecture over the course of the Georgian period.[50] Women are rarely mentioned, except for passing references to the female patrons of stylistically significant buildings, including Lady Isabella Finch for 44 Berkeley Square, and Elizabeth, Countess of Home (*c.*1703-84), whose house in Portman Square was designed by James Wyatt and Robert Adam in 1775-76. Otherwise, Summerson tended to follow mid-twentieth-century assumptions about patriarchal dominance over the urban environment. However, the novelty of his approach lay in the attention he focused on various social, economic and financial circumstances conditioning the development of the city.[51] This was to have considerable impact on later scholars of urban architecture, as discussed below.

Despite Summerson's influential work, the most dominant form of scholarship in relation to British architectural history throughout the twentieth century remained the architectural monograph or biography. Whilst such studies tend to prioritise architectural style over other considerations, they have value in situating notable town houses within the wider *oeuvre* of some of the more celebrated architects. For example, in his 1984 volume on James Gibbs, Terry Friedman dedicated a chapter to town houses which drew attention to the architect's versatility. In 1715, he was employed by Juliana, Countess of Burlington, to remodel the great Stuart mansion, Burlington House, for which he designed the theatrical colonnades framing the forecourt. Almost twenty years later, he designed a very different style of house for the

[50] See E. McKellar, 'Popularism versus professionalism: John Summerson and the twentieth-century creation of the "Georgian"', in B. Arciszewska and E. McKellar, eds, *Articulating British Classicism: New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

[51] H. Colvin, 'Editor's Preface' to Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.viii.

8th Duchess of Norfolk, on a long narrow site in Arlington Street.[52] Friedman's study thus demonstrates a benefit of the architect-led approach when looking across different building typologies and styles. However, it is also a highly selective approach, with relevance to a limited number of buildings. This thesis, conversely, examines the dynamics between and relative input of *both* architect and patron, especially as inflected by gender and status. For example, the opening chapter sheds light on the fraught professional relationship between the Duchess of Marlborough and Sir Christopher Wren during the building of Marlborough House, whilst chapter 2 considers the 8th Duchess of Norfolk's choice of James Gibbs as her architect in the light of their shared Catholic faith. Furthermore, this study explores the relationships between elite women and the architects they employed in a wider social context. Chapter 4, in particular, shows how the architect, William Kent, forged close, informal friendships with female patrons including Dorothy, Lady Burlington, and Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-91).[53]

Studies which prioritise the concerns of the patron or occupier of the town house are of particular relevance to this thesis. Two early publications were Christopher Sykes's *Private Palaces: Life in the Great London Houses* (1985) and David Pearce's *London Mansions: The Palatial Houses of the Nobility* (1986), which both examined the town house from the perspective of the client. These lavishly illustrated surveys were intended for the general reader rather than the academic scholar, but, importantly, they focused far more attention on the *interior* spaces of the

[52] T. Friedman, *James Gibbs* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1984), p.207.

[53] See also C. Campbell Orr, 'The Royal Court, Political Culture, and the Art of Friendship, ca.1685-1750' in S. Weber, ed., *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013).

town house than had hitherto been the case. [54] For example, Pearce claimed that the client's tastes and aspirations were encapsulated in a building's design and decoration. The architect was therefore required 'to carry out a complex and subtle floor-planning exercise' to accommodate the increasingly formal activities of the Georgian aristocracy.[55] Meanwhile, Sykes attempted to recreate everyday lived experience in London's palatial town houses.[56] He made use of contemporary letters and diaries to investigate how these houses functioned for their owners and visitors; a methodology echoed in this thesis. Significantly, Sykes did include a number of case studies relating to female patrons, notably: Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough and her active involvement in the design of Marlborough House; Mary Howard, 9th Duchess of Norfolk (*c*.1702-73) and the rebuilding of Norfolk House in St James's Square; and Elizabeth Percy, Duchess of Northumberland (1716-76) and the refurbishment of Northumberland House. However, these drew on a limited range of archival material, and tended to rely too heavily on those always entertaining, but often exaggerated, accounts of Horace Walpole. For example, the Duchess of Norfolk is described as having a character 'formidable enough' for her to earn the sobriquet, 'My Lord Duchess', whilst the widowed Duchess of Marlborough is presented as 'an irascible old lady, deaf as a post and tortured by gout and rheumatism which kept her in a state of constant warfare with the world'. Indeed, there is a clear tendency in such publications to present such female patrons as eccentrics, as great 'characters', rather than probing more deeply into the details of their roles as patrons, hostesses and matriarchs and taking these roles

[54] It seems likely that both authors were influenced by the work of Mark Girouard which prioritised function over form in the study of English domestic architecture. M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1978).

[55] D. Pearce, *London's Mansions: The Palatial Houses of the Nobility* (London: Batsford, 1986), p.14.

[56] C. Sykes, *Private Palaces.*

seriously.[57] Whilst the opening chapter of this thesis also examines the role of the Duchess of Marlborough as the patron and owner of Marlborough House, it attempts to offer a much more nuanced assessment of the Duchess's ambitions for building the house.

More recently, however, a handful of studies have been published which focus on individual female patrons of London town houses more productively. Two of these relate to the patronage of the celebrated bluestocking hostess, Elizabeth Montagu (1718-1800). The first, by Kerry Bristol, concerns her house in Portman Square; the second, by Rosemary Baird, relates to her earlier London home at 23 Hill Street.[58] Mrs Montagu's neighbour in Portman Square, Elizabeth, Countess of Home, has also attracted some scholarly interest, notably from Eileen Harris, who published an illuminating study of Home House in the *Burlington Magazine* in 1997.[59] More recently, the *Georgian Group Journal* has published two articles exploring female patronage of London town houses: Sarah Freeman's 2012 article on the Countess of Pomfret's gothic townhouse at 18 Arlington Street, and my own, referred to above, which focuses on 44 Berkeley Square.[60] Although still relatively few and far between, such articles showcase the advantage of the case study approach in their depth of

[57] Given Sykes's intended readership, it is perhaps understandable that he enlivened his accounts with a degree of salacious material.

[58] K. Bristol, '22 Portman Square: Mrs Montagu and her Palais de la vieillesse', *The British Art Journal*, 2:3 (2001), pp.72-85; R. Baird, '"The Queen of the Bluestockings": Mrs. Montagu's House at 23 Hill Street Rediscovered', *Apollo*, 158:498 (2003), pp.43-49.

[59] L. Lewis, 'Elizabeth, Countess of Home and her House in Portman Square', *Burlington Magazine*, 109:773 (August 1967), pp.443-51; E. Harris, 'Home House: Adam versus Wyatt', *The Burlington Magazine*, 139:1130 (1997), pp.308-21.

[60] S. Freeman, 'An Englishwoman's Home is Her Castle: Lady Pomfret's House at 18 Arlington Street', *Georgian Group Journal*, 20 (2012), pp.87-101; J. Learmouth, 'The London Town House of Lady Isabella Finch'.

detail. By allowing thorough appraisal of the relationship between a female patron, her house and its architect and craftsmen, they help to draw out the meaning of these buildings. On the other hand, there is a clear danger in telling the single story, and a tendency to focus on exceptional women.[61] In selecting the case studies for this thesis from a long initial list of potential women and houses, my intention has been to exploit the detail of the case study approach, but including less well-known women as well as more renowned individuals. The structure of this thesis also employs different perspectives in order to avoid producing a succession of individual biographies. Only the first two chapters adopt a biographical approach, focusing on two individual women's involvement in the creation and use of their town houses. Chapters 3 and 4 shift focus to examine two residential districts of the West End. The final chapter, meanwhile, assesses the role of the town house over three different generations of women, incorporating individual biographies within that of the family unit.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly emphasised the limitations of prioritising style and innovation when studying London's architecture. In *The Birth of Modern London: The Development and the Design of the City, 1660-1720*, Elizabeth McKellar places a far greater emphasis on issues of production, practice and the role of the craftsman than had hitherto been the case.[62] Her later publication, *Articulating British Classicism* (2004), edited with Barbara Arciszewska, furthermore contends that urban architecture of the eighteenth century poses 'a profound problem for the

[61] For a discussion on the dangers of ascribing architectural patronage to a singular exceptional woman, see H. Hills, *Architecture and the Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.10; See also R. Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity: The Role of Elite Women in the Yorkshire Country House, 1685-1858' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2003), p.13.

[62] E. McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London: The Development and the Design of the City, 1660-1720* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.xii.

classical canon', since the majority of urban buildings were produced by 'anonymous builders rather than architects'.[63] Whilst some of the houses included in this study were certainly designed by celebrated architects, many were not, including the Countess of Portland's house in the Privy Garden, Whitehall, and the first house constructed on the site of 5 St James's Square. This raises a number of important questions. Why did some of these patrons prioritise the employment of an architect, whilst others, though equally wealthy, were content to purchase a house constructed by a (now anonymous) builder? To what extent was the architectural style of the town house important to these women, and how did its location affect this? We also need to question the commonly held assumption that women prioritised the interior decoration of their homes over the building fabric itself. As noted by Kerry Bristol, architectural history has not been 'gender friendly' as a discipline because it relies on the traditional sources of drawings, bills, receipts and financial accounts, all of which were typically addressed to the master of the household, regardless of his wife's degree of involvement. It is therefore assumed that men had greater agency over stylistic choices regarding the architecture. Meanwhile, the subject of women is usually 'relegated to a separate chapter [of a book] that typically centres on interior decoration (as distinct from interior design)'.[64]

Another useful approach towards the study of London's residential architecture has been to focus on certain areas of the capital from the perspective of planning and

[63] Arciszewska and McKellar, *Articulating British Classicism*, p.xxi. The blurred distinction between architects and builders in relation to urban architecture has also been noted by James Ayres. J. Ayres, *Building the Georgian City* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998), p.7.

[64] K. Bristol, 'Between the Exotic and the Everyday: Sabine Winn at Home 1765-1798', in J. Ilmakunnas and J. Stobart, eds, *A Taste for Luxury in Early Modern Europe: Display, Acquisition and Boundaries* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p.161.

development. Two texts, in particular, have influenced the methodology employed in chapters 3 and 4 which each examine a residential district of the West End from the perspective of its female inhabitants. The first of these is Jacques Carré's '"Private and "Public" in the Extension of Georgian London's West End' in which the author draws attention to the distinctive character of the new aristocratic estates, including St James's Square and the Ten Acre Close (or Burlington Estate). He argues that their layout tended to be inward looking, with the overall result that the new West End could be viewed as 'a kind of mosaic of districts without spatial cohesion.'[65] Such an approach encourages a reading of these named localities as neighbourhoods, each with their own character and sense of community, a concept which is corroborated in my own research, especially in chapter 4. Julie Schlarman's study of the social geography of Grosvenor Square between 1720 and 1760 has also provided an invaluable model for my studies of the Whitehall area and Burlington estate.[66] By focusing on one residential district, Schlarman is able to show how architecture and the urban environment both structured and provided a setting for the activities and functions of day-to-day life. Her study is also one of the few scholarly articles to examine the topography of the West End from the perspective of the women who lived there. She questions how street patterns and elements in the built landscape interacted with gender, and how they helped to forge and sustain social, political and familial relationships.[67] Her methodology also demonstrates the effectiveness of including

[65] J. Carré, '"Private and "Public" in the Extension of Georgian London's West End', in Sophie Body-Gendrot, Jacques Carré, Romain Garbaye, eds, *A City of One's Own: Blurring the Boundaries Between Private and Public*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp.13-24.

[66] J. Schlarman, 'The Social Geography of Grosvenor Square, 1720-60' *The London Journal*, 28:1 (2003), pp.8-28.

[67] *Ibid*., p.18

quantitative data as a means of providing a comprehensive overview of female residents in a specific neighbourhood.

Whilst most scholars of the town house have chosen to focus on either the palatial style of residence or the terraced house, this thesis does not restrict its study to either building type, or even accept such a straightforward binary. Here, the embracing of different typologies seeks to offer both a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the London town house. For example, a number of the properties explored in this thesis, such as the houses of Charlotte Boscawen, Lady Falmouth (1680-1754), and Elizabeth Dunch in Whitehall, cannot conveniently be categorised as either palatial houses or terraced houses since both were constructed in a piecemeal fashion and incorporated former lodgings or parts of the palace buildings. Their inclusion here thus complicates, but also illuminates, our understanding of the town house. Issues of typology also raise questions about the impact of status on the style of a town house. Why did the Duchess of Marlborough choose to build a palatial new residence rather than purchasing an existing house in St James's Square? Why were some content to own a house on a leasehold basis, or even just to rent in London, when they had the wherewithal to buy or build? Michael Port is one of the few scholars to have considered the various factors influencing such decisions. His conclusion was that those opting for the more extravagant freehold mansion were motivated by political ambition, family pride and social climbing.[68] It is also interesting to consider housing type in relation to different stages in the life cycle. For example, whilst Dorothy, Countess of Burlington, occupied the palatial Burlington House during her married life, she moved to a terraced house in Savile Street after becoming a widow. In

[68] M.H. Port, 'West End Palaces: The Aristocratic Town House in London, 1730-1830', *The London Journal*, 20:1 (1995), p.34.

contrast, the Duchess of Marlborough, remained mistress of the family's palatial town house until her death at the age of eighty-four.

The amount which a member of the elite was prepared to invest in their town house was clearly related to the importance they attached to it relative to their country estate. Despite his focus on Georgian London, Summerson claimed that 'members of the aristocracy were not interested in their town houses to anything like the same extent that they were in their country dwellings'.[69] This claim has since been strongly refuted. Joseph Friedman, a leading scholar in this field, has argued that the English gentry and aristocracy generally spent as much, or even more time in the capital as they did in the country. To support his argument, Friedman has drawn attention to the diverse functions of London's mansions. They could provide venues for concerts and recitals (as noted above), gathering-places for artists and writers, fora for intellectual debate, and sites in which to showcase art collections.[70] Meanwhile, Port has drawn attention to the varied and complex relationships between town and country houses. His 2003 study underscored the value of considering each residence within the context of the family's full property portfolio.[71] In this model, it is impossible to assess the function and significance of Marlborough House, for example, without considering the

[69] Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.101.

[70] Friedman, *Spencer House*, p.18. See also Friedman, 'Town and Country: The Spencers of Althorp' in Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*, pp.99-118. I am very grateful to Joseph Friedman for giving me his time to discuss aspects of this thesis, especially in relation to chapter 1 on Marlborough House. He is currently working on a new book on the London town house: *Treasure Houses of London: Five Hundred Years of Private Artistic Patronage and Collecting* (Yale University Press, forthcoming).

[71] M.H. Port,'Town House and Country House: their Interaction', Arnold, *Georgian Country House*, pp.117-138. Rachel Stewart also noted that scholarship on the town house enhanced scholarly understanding of the country house and 'the lives and values of the people who lived in both'. Stewart, *Town House*, p.17.

other properties owned by the Marlborough family: Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire; Windsor Lodge in Berkshire; Holywell House in Hertfordshire.

It is also important to note that the relative use and significance of properties in town and country appears, in fact, to have varied widely. For example, as Giles Waterfield noted, the Cavendish family apparently attached greater importance to their house on Piccadilly than to their estate at Chatsworth in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the Bedford family evidently prioritised Woburn Abbey over their house in Bloomsbury during the same period.[72] A preference for either the town or country estate usually depended on lifestyle and personal inclination. Such variability is often evident in the correspondence of eighteenth-century elite women. Whilst Anne, Countess of Strafford, was impatient to return to London after spending time on her father's estate at Bradenham, where she 'never spoke more than ten words in a day', Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford (1699-1754), appears to have regarded her trips to the city as a wearisome duty: 'I am launching into the hurry of London where most that passes is as indifferent to me as the rattling of the coaches'.[73]

As noted above, two important contributions have been made to literature on the Georgian London town house in recent years: Rachel Stewart's study of 2009, and Susanna Avery-Quash and Kate Retford's edited volume, published in 2019.[74]

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[72] G. Waterfield, 'The Town House as Gallery of Art', *London Journal*, 20 (1995), pp.48-49; Retford, 'Introduction', Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*, pp.4-5.

[73] BL Add MS 22226, f.15: Lady Strafford to Lord Strafford, 1 November 1711. *Correspondence of Frances, Countess of Hartford and Henrietta Countess of Pomfret*, 2 vols (London, 1806), vol.2, p.136: Frances to Henrietta, 19 November 1740. See also S. Bending, *Green Retreats: Women Gardens and Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[74] Stewart, *Town House*; Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*. I am very grateful to Susannah Avery-Quash and Kate Retford for including me in the one-day workshop at the Paul

Stewart's study shifted the focus away from the palatial style of house towards the terrace house which enjoyed such considerable popularity with the elite in the Georgian period. Maintaining the tradition of Sykes and Pearce, she chose to examine the town house from the perspective of its owners and occupants. However, unlike these scholars, Stewart devoted the first half of her book to a consideration of the function of the town house, conducting a thorough exploration of its social contexts.[75] She also underscored the value of archival evidence in personal and family papers in helping to illuminate those functions. Whilst the methodology of this thesis differs from Stewart's in adopting a case-study approach (in turn of biography, area and family), it likewise draws extensively on material such as correspondence to shed light on the concerns and ambitions of clients either building or purchasing a town house.

Crucially, as noted above, Stewart was one of the first scholars to underscore the important role of women in relation to the town house.[76] In particular, she drew attention to its significance in relation to each stage of a woman's life cycle. For example, she observed that residence in the capital appeared to be especially appealing for newly married women, eager to establish their position in society and to enjoy the city's entertainments before starting a family. She also noted considerable evidence that women preferred to give birth in London, owing to the availability of medical expertise and the proximity of kinship networks.[77] Finally, she pointed to the fact that widows would often take up residence in London for longer periods once 'their

Mellon Centre in April 2017 when the authors came together to discuss pre-circulated drafts of their chapters.

[75] In the second half of the book, Stewart adopts a more 'explicitly architectural approach', looking at the house as 'a design task', with a particular focus on the work of the Adam brothers.

[76] Stewart, *Town House*, p.49.

[77] *Ibid*., p.34.

husband's late estate had passed to the eldest son or other heir.'[78] This important point was underscored by Amanda Vickery's *Behind Closed Doors,* published the same year, in which she noted that widows were the women 'most likely to leave an architectural mark and shape an interior to their personal taste'. Moreover, Vickery commented, wealthy dowagers often 'saved their glitter for London, as a courtesy to their daughter-in-law, the new mistress of the ancestral pile'.[79] Residence in the West End was thus a particularly attractive proposition for many financially independent widows, such as the dowager Duchess of Norfolk or Jane, Countess of Portland. Not only did it offer them the chance to enjoy the city's myriad entertainments, but it also allowed them to participate in social and kinship networks. It could even help with finding a new husband, as in the case of Anne Ingram, Viscountess Irwin (1696-1764), discussed in chapter 4.

In the essays in Avery-Quash and Retford's edited volume, evidence is drawn from a diverse range of material to recreate many lost buildings and their contents. Jeremy Howard's chapter, examining the reconstruction of Norfolk House between 1748 and 1756, vividly describes the property's magnificent interiors as they appeared at the grand opening party in 1756.[80] The reader is taken on a room-by-room tour of the house, taking in not only the costly decoration and furnishings, but also the costumes and jewellery of the guests. Such an approach is particularly effective in 'animating' the London town house. Meanwhile, Matthew Jenkins and Charlotte

[78] *Ibid.,* p.38.

[79] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009), p.220. Julie Schlarman has also noted that widows were 'a dominant urban feature' in the eighteenth century. Schlarman, 'Social Geography', p.18.

[80] J. Howard, '"You never saw such a scene of magnificence and taste": Norfolk House after its Grand Reopening in 1756' in Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House,* pp.49-70.

Newman's in-depth study of 43 Parliament Street, home of the politician, John Calcraft, from 1758 to 1766, showed how the house's use and layout reflected the complex interactions of private and public life.[81] Such methodologies have influenced my own analysis of the interiors of both Marlborough House and 16 Arlington Street, where sufficient physical and visual evidence survives to enable me to construct a sense of these rooms as they would have been experienced by a contemporary visitor. Thinking about the various ways in which interior spaces could be employed helps to provide a fuller understanding of the adaptable nature of the town house. However, in this thesis, I also look across both everyday habitation and more formal use to see how spaces could change and be adapted to accommodate various functions. Of particular interest is the use of town houses for formal entertaining and ceremonies such as christenings, weddings and funerary rituals.[82] A bedchamber could, for a period, thus be adorned with costly hangings, upholstery and borrowed silverware in order to provide a lavish setting for the reception of elite visitors following a birth. Similarly, a drawing room could be hung with mourning cloth to provide a setting for lying-in-state.

Elite Women

As already stated, this thesis does not only consider women's roles as the patrons and/or creators of town houses. It also explores the ways in which the town house provided a setting for their activities, and a base from which to participate in social,

[81] M. Jenkins and C. Newman, 'A House Divided: Building Biographies and the Town House in Georgian London' in Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*, pp.27-48.

[82] In an illuminating article focusing on the changing function of domestic space in the Georgian London interior, Benjamin Heller advocated the addition of a 'temporal dimension' to our conceptualization of space. B. Heller, 'Leisure and the Use of Domestic Space in Georgian London, *The Historical Journal*, 53:3 (September 2010), p.645.

familial and cultural exchange in the capital. In order to evaluate these roles, I draw on the rich body of recent literature exploring gender in the eighteenth century and, specifically, women's history. This overlaps with two closely related areas of scholarship: the history of public and private space, and the history of the family and the life cycle.

The relationship between gender and space has long been central to debates in women's history. In an influential study written in 1987, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall posited that the formation of a middle class with a distinctive identity and lifestyle resulted in an increasing tendency for women to be excluded from public life, obliging them instead to focus on their responsibilities in the domestic realm. They suggested that a new middle-class morality was partly formulated in opposition to the corrupt, over-indulgent lifestyle of the aristocracy – but it became so influential as to soon be adopted by the elite, anxious to deny their reputation for moral transgression.[83] However, the difficulties involved in this conceptual approach, which relied on quite simple definitions of 'public' and 'private', soon led scholars to challenge its usefulness. Vickery, one of the pioneering scholars in this debate, condemned the separate spheres model as an inadequate conceptual device. It relied, she pointed out, too heavily on didactic and prescriptive accounts, and conflated too easily with the public/private dichotomy.[84] Vickery recommended an alternative approach to understanding female experience based on the close study of personal manuscripts, written by women rather than relying on the rhetoric of domesticity to be

[83] L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 2002). See also A Bermingham, 'Introduction', in J. Brewer and A. Bermingham, *Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.10.

[84] A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of The Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *Historical Journal* 36 (1993), pp.383-414.

found in contemporary prescriptive texts. These arguments were developed further in her 1998 study, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, in which she used women's personal writings to show that an elite woman's horizon extended beyond the household and family, and that the house itself was not 'in any simple sense a private domestic sphere.'[85] Although her study focused primarily on wives and daughters in the gentry, many of her observations are of great relevance for aristocratic women.[86] Vickery also drew attention to female participation in the new sites of commercialized leisure in London's West End, including assemblies, promenades, theatres and leisure gardens.[87] Her work has been very influential for scholars such as Lawrence Klein, Hannah Greig, Ingrid Tague and Ruth Larsen, who have all made valuable contributions to the interpretation of women's relationship with domestic and public space.[88] This thesis builds further on this rich body of research, to explore how the complex and interwoven private and public roles of elite women were played out in the context of the London town house.

Another important area of scholarship which engages with the public and private roles of elite women in eighteenth-century London society concerns the royal

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[85] A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998), p.9.

[86] See, for example, Lawrence Klein's observations on the letters of Lady Mary Pierrepoint. L. Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 29:1 (1995), pp.102-03.

[87] Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.227.

[88] Lawrence Klein drew attention to a growing awareness of the complementarity of the sexes which came about in the eighteenth century when women were considered as 'agents of politeness and refinement'. L. Klein, 'Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere in Early Eighteenth-Century England', in J. Still and M. Worton, eds, *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp.100-15. For a further discussion of the fashionable activities of eighteenth-century women see, H. Greig, *Beau* Monde; Tague, *Women of Quality*; Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity'.

court. Scholars here are divided. On the one hand, historians such as Linda Colley and John Brewer have argued that the court declined in importance during the first half of the eighteenth century.[89] On the other, scholars including Hannah Smith and Clarissa Campbell Orr have rigorously questioned this view, contending that the early Georgian court continued to wield considerable power and influence throughout the period from both a political and a cultural perspective.[90] My own research inclines me towards the latter view. As the correspondence and diaries of several elite women reveal, their daily lives were clearly entwined with the activities of the court.[91] Prominent female courtiers, including Dorothy, Lady Burlington, and Jane, Countess of Portland, divided their time between their town houses and the royal palaces whilst resident in the city. Hannah Greig has also drawn attention to the importance of court rituals in metropolitan life.[92] In particular, she has shown how attendance at court ceremonies, including royal birthdays and anniversaries, constituted public acts 'performed under the gaze of a wider audience', prompting considerable comment in newspapers and periodicals. Such royal ceremonies provided opportunities for men and women to parade lavish courtly wardrobes as they travelled through the streets and squares of the West End.[93] Both Schlarman and Campbell Orr have noted that the Hanoverian court relied on the town houses of courtiers as additional venues for entertainment, creating an interesting parallel with the way in which commercial entertainments spilled over

[89] L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992); J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997).

[90] Smith, *Georgian Monarchy*; C. Campbell Orr, 'Mrs Delany and the Court' in M. Laird and A. Weisberg-Roberts, eds, *Mrs Delany and her Circle* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009).

[91] See Campbell Orr, 'Mrs Delany and the Court', p.41.

[92] Greig, *Beau Monde*, pp.100-01.

[93] *Ibid*, p.101.

into and intersected with events held in town houses, mentioned above. Consequently, 'the London geography of royal residences and aristocratic town houses were an integral part of the operations of a court society'.[94] For example, Isabella Finch planned her entertainments in Berkeley Square to coincide with royal celebrations. In November 1753, she wrote to the Duke of Newcastle: '*entre nous*, the finishing my summer partys with a Dinner on the King's birthday *donnera de l'éclat* to the former ones'.[95] Meanwhile, the Countess of Portland frequently entertained the royal princesses at her riverside house in Whitehall when they were *en route* between the landing stage on the river and St James's Palace.

Although elite women, including courtiers, were formally excluded from eighteenth-century politics, 'the new mixed-sex, conversation-based, polite society', which thrived in London's West End, opened up opportunities for women to exert a degree of political agency in a social environment.[96] Some well-connected, London-based women acted as political hostesses, and ownership of an impressive town house greatly facilitated this role. In describing the figure of the politically-engaged hostess, Elaine Chalus and Fiona Montgomery have noted: 'Endowed with rank through birth or marriage, political hostesses possessed the means and the motivation as well as the requisite charm or force of character to entertain for factional or party ends.'[97] However, as noted above, such scholarship has tended to focus on the latter half of the

[94] C. Campbell Orr, 'Popular History, Court Studies and Courtier Diaries', *The Court Historian*, 17:1 (2012), p.71. See also Schlarman, 'Social Geography', p.24.

[95] BL Add MS 32733, f.192: Lady Isabella Finch to the Duke of Newcastle, 3 November 1753.

[96] Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.3. See also Klein, 'Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere'.

[97] E. Chalus and F. Montgomery, 'Women and Politics' in *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p.226

century, leaving scope for further research on its earlier decades.[98] Greig has helped somewhat to redress this imbalance, showing how political culture was deeply embedded in the daily activities of both Anne, Countess of Strafford, and Elizabeth Hervey, Countess of Bristol (1676-1741), in the 1710s. In this analysis, she has shown how the concentrated nature of elite society in London made 'all manner of socio-political encounters possible'.[99] As noted by several feminist historians - including Greig, Tague and Judith Lewis - the nature of politics in this period was highly personal and rooted in kinship networks, so elite women could use their social and familial roles to good effect in furthering political causes. Moreover, many were able to advance the interests of family, kin and connections so as to contribute to the maintenance of aristocratic hegemony.[100]

This leads to another important, related area of scholarship: the role of women in the aristocratic family. One of the leading scholars in this field, Naomi Tadmor, has elucidated how notions of 'family' and 'kinship' could refer to a range of different relationships in the eighteenth century. These included: the linear family, characterised by notions of dynasty and inheritance; the nuclear family, typically a co-resident father, mother and offspring; the household family, referring to all inhabitants (family and servants) living under one roof; and the extended family, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, and adult children. Networks of available kin expanded on marriage,

[98] An important exception to this is Rachel Weil's study of women's political roles during the late Stuart period, 1680-1714. R. Weil, *Political Passions: Gender, the Family, and Political argument in England, 1680-1714* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

[99] Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.164.

[100] I. Tague, 'Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family in the Early Eighteenth Century' in H. Berry and E. Foyster, eds, *Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.184-208; J. Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class and Politics in late Georgian Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

creating bilateral kinship groups, extending and complicating the eighteenth-century family still further.[101] As a number of historians have shown, aristocratic women typically played a central role in managing these extended familial networks.[102] An important focus of this thesis is to examine how such women supported and maintained vital kinship ties during their periods of residence in the capital. Not only were women able to promote the interests of their relations through the social and political networking in London noted above, but they were also able to offer temporary accommodation in town to members of the extended family, including elderly relatives and unmarried siblings (see chapter 5). The elite London household was typically in flux, with some family members staying for a relatively brief period, effectively using the town house as a hotel or convenient stop-over point, whilst others would be there for extended periods of months or even years. Moreover, as noted by Schlarman, family members from different households often lived within close proximity of one another, thus helping to compensate for the times of the year when they lived far apart on their country estates.[103] Inevitably, women's roles in relation to their families changed over the course of the life cycle with marriage and motherhood bringing new responsibilities. Widowhood could also herald greater economic agency, and some considerable power if a woman was appointed guardian of children still in their minority. In the case of wealthy widows, such influence could persist into those

[101] N. Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[102] Tague, 'Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family'; R. Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). K. Retford, *The Conversation Piece: Making Modern Art in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2017).

[103] Schlarman, 'Social Geography', p.18.

children's adult lives, and even into the lives of their grandchildren, as will be seen in the cases of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough and Jane, Countess of Portland.[104]

Sources

As noted earlier, the widespread destruction and dismantling of London's eighteenth-century town houses has made the task of researching these buildings a challenging one. Like the contributors to Avery-Quash and Retford's recent *Georgian London Town House* volume, this thesis draws on a diverse range of material including plans, architectural drawings, inventories, catalogues, paintings, photographs and accounts written by inhabitants and other contemporaries.[105] By combining these sources, I explore how these houses and their interiors were inhabited and experienced in the early Georgian period.

Before considering the various types of primary material employed in this thesis more fully, it is worth drawing attention to my debt to the *Survey of London*, an invaluable source of authoritative information on London's built environment.[106] Over the course of its 120-year history, the *Survey* has published fifty-three volumes, each exploring the topographical and architectural evolution of a single parish in the area formerly comprised by the County of London.[107] Of particular value to the present study are the *Survey*'s detailed construction and refurbishment histories of individual

[104] Tague, 'Aristocratic Women and Ideas of family', pp.203-07.

[105] Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*.

[106] In November 2012, Andrew Saint, gave an informative talk on the work and history of the *Survey of London* as part of the Gresham College lecture series. https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/the-survey-of-london.

[107] Matthew Jenkins and Charlotte Newman point out that the *Survey of London* archives and publications are notably underutilized. Jenkins and Newman, 'A House Divided', p.29.

houses, covering both exteriors and interiors. Moreover, for certain districts, it provides lists of principal residents based on information compiled from rate book records. In this sense, it offers an ideal starting point for both social and architectural historians. It has proved particularly valuable for chapters 3, 4 and 5, focusing on Whitehall, the Burlington estate and St James's Square; all districts covered by the *Survey*. However, there are notable omissions: both Marlborough House, the subject of chapter 1, and Arlington Street, discussed in chapter 2, are not yet included in its coverage.

Visual / Material

Despite the loss of so much of London's eighteenth-century building fabric, there are some important cases of survival, examples of which are discussed in this thesis.[108] They include Marlborough House (now the headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat), Burlington House (now home to the Royal Academy of Arts) and 16 Arlington Street, part of which has survived in the clubhouse of the Royal Overseas League. Number 5 St James's Square, as rebuilt by Matthew Brettingham in 1741, is also substantially extant in recognisable form. However, none of the houses in Whitehall's Privy Garden and Scotland Yard, examined in chapter 3, remain standing. The Privy Garden underwent a dramatic transformation in 1938 when its town houses were demolished and replaced by the vast new building designed by Vincent Harris for the Ministry of Defence (completed in 1952). Whilst the street pattern of the Burlington estate has remained essentially intact, the majority of its Georgian terraces were replaced in the twentieth century by commercial buildings. Colen Campbell's

[108] For a full discussion on the widespread destruction of London's Georgian architecture, see 'Image and Artifact, 1830-1988', Summerson, *Georgian London,* 347-78; J. Friedman 'Afterword' in Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House,* pp.267-73.

girls' school in Boyle Street was demolished in 1937, whilst two of the estate's grandest houses, 29 and 30 Old Burlington Street (both designed by Lord Burlington), were taken down in 1935.

The widespread destruction of town houses, together with the rapidly changing topography of the West End, means that surviving visual evidence becomes vital for reconfiguring these properties in their original context. Maps have proved crucial to this endeavour. For example, John Rocque's *Plan of the cities of London and Westminster and borough of Southwark* of 1746 greatly assists our understanding of the geography and street pattern of the West End (fig.i.5). Such maps also shed light on the proximity of the various houses under scrutiny, highlighting the concentrated character of the area. This is also true of detailed topographical prints. Jan Kip's meticulously rendered *View and Perspective of London, Westminster and St James's Park* (1727) provides an extensive panorama of the streets and squares to the north of Pall Mall, the bend in the River Thames, the broad avenues of St James's Park, and the distant spires of the city on the horizon (fig.i.6). Likewise, the river views or cityscapes of Canaletto and Samuel Scott further enhance our understanding of the character of mid-eighteenth-century London, especially regarding the West End's relationship to the Thames, the major thoroughfare linking different parts of the city and beyond, but also an arena for spectacle and display in its own right (as will be discussed in chapter 3).

In terms of individual buildings, architectural plans, drawings, and early twentieth-century photographs all shed light on exterior elevations and spatial configurations. When examining architectural drawings, it is important to recognise that houses were not always constructed precisely according to the architect's recorded design. The south-facing façade of Marlborough House, for example, differed from

Wren's original drawing, reproduced in *Vitruvius Britannicus* (discussed in chapter 1). However, as noted by Retford, the frequent disparity between an early design for a building and its final appearance can help to develop our understanding of the intentions and aspirations of the patron and/or architect.[109] Photographic evidence also helps us to understand the original appearance of town houses. Both the London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) and the City of Westminster Archive Centre hold early twentieth-century photographs and plans recording the interiors of houses prior to demolition or alteration. As an example, the photographs of 16 Arlington Street, held by the LMA, proved essential to my understanding of the lost interiors of this building (chapter 2).

Textual

This thesis also draws on a wide range of textual evidence, including building accounts, inventories, legal documents, newspaper accounts and personal correspondence. Such evidence has been sourced from archives in London and other parts of the country, including: the British Library (London); the National Archive (Kew); Chatsworth House (Derbyshire); Stonyhurst College (Lancashire); Blenheim Palace (Oxfordshire); Arundel Castle (West Sussex); the Lancashire Record Office and the East Sussex Record Office.

Inventories are valuable records, crucial for evaluating the contents of houses at given points in time. Here, the inventory of Marlborough House dictated by the Duchess of Marlborough in 1740, and that recording the contents of 16 Arlington Street in 1791, have proven especially useful.[110] Building accounts have also survived

[109] Retford, 'Introduction', Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*, p.12.

[110] BL Add MS 61473: Inventory of Blenheim Palace and Marlborough House, 1740; ESRO, SAS/G 50/17/108: Inventory of the goods in Lord Gage's House, Arlington Street, December 7th, 1791.

for both these properties. In the case of 16 Arlington Street, a previously undiscovered list of building expenses has enabled me to identify the craftsmen who worked on this house, besides shedding revealing light on the relative expenses incurred in each aspect of the building's construction. Furthermore, conveyancing agreements between architects or builders and patrons illuminate relationships such as that between Nicholas Hawksmoor and Lady Anne Irwin during the completion of her house in New Burlington Street. In the case of property held under lease from the Crown, there is an impressively comprehensive collection of Treasury books and legal documents stored at the National Archive. These documents have provided essential material for researching the Whitehall area, especially regarding disputes which broke out over property boundaries and the duration of leases.

Wills are another form of legal document which provide invaluable information regarding women's relationship with property. [111] As 'the most significant item of non-entailed property' contained in a will, the town house generally offered its owner a considerable degree of flexibility in terms of its disposal.[112] Some of the women focused on in this thesis often rewrote their wills when circumstances and relationships changed, showing the considerable agency they had over future ownership of their town house. These documents can also provide valuable information about the contents of women's houses, identifying objects of particular value to the testator.

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[111] Marcia Pointon, Helen Berry and Amanda Vickery have all stressed the value of wills when researching the relationship between women and their property. M. Pointon, *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possessions and Representation in English Visual Culture 1650-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); H. Berry, 'Women, Consumption and Taste', in H. Barker and E. Chalus, eds, *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp.57-77; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.194.

[112] Stewart, *Town House*, p.61. The town house was alienable and therefore not subject to the terms of strict settlement.

However, for this thesis, the most valuable type of written source left by women has proved to be their personal correspondence. Many of the elite women discussed in the ensuing chapters were prolific letter writers who recorded their daily experiences whilst in London. As noted by Ruth Larsen, aristocratic women, because of their high levels of education and literacy, had the vocabulary to express opinions on a wide range of topics, including politics, affairs relating to the royal court, society gossip, and family concerns.[113] Their letters also provide useful information about the running of their households, and the decoration and maintenance of their homes. Of particular importance to this thesis are the letters of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, Jane, Countess of Portland, Lady Isabella Wentworth and Anne, 1st Countess of Strafford. As noted by Leonie Hannan, the voluminous quantity of letters surviving in the country's archives demonstrates that correspondence was a time-consuming and meaningful activity for elite women of the period. Even leading society hostesses would devote considerable time to this relatively secluded task.[114] In the case of the Countess of Portland, her letters often provide vivid accounts of the vista from her window since her writing desk was set up in a room overlooking the Thames.

Whilst this thesis is heavily dependent on the rich material provided by women's correspondence, it is, of course, important to note the potential problems of relying too literally on such documents which often present a biased version of events. A pertinent case is that of the Duchess of Marlborough, whose letters frequently take the form of self-justifying diatribes, aimed at convincing her friends and fellow

[113] Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity', p.32.

[114] L. Hannan, 'Women's Letters: Eighteenth-Century Letter-Writing and the Life of the Mind' in H. Greig, J. Hamlett, L. Hannan, eds, *Gender and Material Culture in Britain since 1600* (New York: Palgrave, 2016) p.44. See also S. Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

courtiers of her honourable conduct. Meanwhile, those written by Anne, Countess of Strafford, to her new husband in the Hague constantly draw attention to her laudable qualities as a wife – especially her ability to maintain an appropriate level of display whilst simultaneously keeping control of the household expenses. The concrete information contained in such letters thus tends to be selective and biased – but the way in which that information is mediated by the writer sheds a revealing light on opinions and motivations when considered in an appropriately nuanced way. Finally, it is worth observing that a surviving collection of letters will only represent an incomplete picture of any woman's life. Whilst we have numerous missives written by the Countess of Portland during the 1730s and 40s, we have none relating to the period in which she first took up residence in her house in the Privy Garden in 1718. And one of the most elusive women to research in this thesis has been Mary, 8th Duchess of Norfolk. Despite the fact that so many of her legal documents have survived, very few of her letters are included in the family papers. Given her known Jacobite sympathies, it seems highly likely that much of her more personal correspondence was destroyed to protect her reputation.

Finally, but still of considerable value to this study, are the numerous newspapers and news pamphlets which have survived from this period. In particular, the collection gathered together by the Reverend Charles Burney (1757-1817), preserved in the British Library, has provided an invaluable source of information about the social activities of many of the elite women focused on in this thesis.[115] To date, this source – although well used in other fields of study – has received little

[115] *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* includes more than 1,000 pamphlets, newspapers etc dating from the 1620s to c.1800. https://www.gale.com/intl/c/17th-and-18th-century-burney-newspapers-collection.

attention from scholars of either the town house or the lives of elite women in this period. Through close examination of newspaper reports, this thesis offers new evidence about some of the significant events which took place in town houses. These ranged from grand entertainments, such as balls and masquerades, to ceremonial events, including baptisms, weddings and funerary rituals, as noted above. Such evidence further underscores the need to consider the town house as not exclusively a private domestic realm, but instead an adaptable space, which could be transformed into a high-profile public setting, or even sacred space, when occasion demanded.

Structure and Chapters

Several factors contributed to the selection of case studies explored in this thesis. Having decided to focus on the first half of the eighteenth century for the reasons outlined above, I created a list of women whose role in creating and/or inhabiting a London town house could shed valuable light in answering my research questions. Quantity and availability of evidence, including material, visual and textual sources, inevitably played an important part in influencing this selection. For reasons of time and space, I was not able to include all the women originally identified as meriting further study in this context (see Appendices I and II). My selected case studies were taken from this larger list with the aim of offering depth of analysis, whilst also enabling me to approach my research questions from a variety of angles. As noted above, the first two chapters adopt a biographical perspective, each focusing on a specific case study, contextualising a London house in the life of its female patron. This approach is then extended in space in chapters 3 and 4, in which I examine specific residential areas in the West End. The second perspective allows me to focus

on several women who inhabited the same locality. It also facilitates an examination of the social and familial networks which often bound neighbourhoods together. In chapter 5, the case study approach is extended in time, as I examine three generations of women from the same family in relation to their London property. This final chapter also draws together many of the themes explored earlier in the thesis. Moreover, its scope enables me to look both backwards to the late Stuart period, and forwards to the latter half of the eighteenth century, beyond my specified period of study.

Part One: Life

The first two chapters contextualise both the construction and use of a specific London town house in the life of its female patron and owner, raising key issues of agency and self-representation. What can such buildings tell us about the ambitions and agendas of these women? How successful were the completed buildings in realising those ambitions and agendas? Seeking to answer such questions requires a nuanced approach, resisting the temptation to make easy assumptions about motivations, based on apparent character traits.

Chapter 1, focusing on the patronage of Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, examines her commissioning of Sir Christopher Wren to build a town house to the east of St James's Palace in 1709. Although the Duchess has received considerable attention from historians and biographers, mostly considering her influence as the politically engaged wife of John, Duke of Marlborough, and long-term favourite of Queen Anne, her role as the patron of Marlborough House has been largely neglected. However, the construction of this London town house sheds an illuminating light on the Duchess's ambitions at an important turning point in her life and career. Not only had she fallen from royal favour at this time, but she was also

facing an onslaught of public criticism. Fuelled by the Tories, many were accusing her of greed and financial impropriety over her management of the Queen's funds. The chapter considers how the Duchess attempted to manipulate the reputation of both herself and her family through the fabric and decoration of this prominent town house. It also illuminates the changing function of Marlborough House over the three decades of her occupancy, including its role as a setting for political entertainment, a hub for family connections, and a space for ceremonial events.

Chapter 2 focuses on 16 Arlington Street, an impressive terraced house overlooking Green Park, built by James Gibbs, for Mary Howard, 8th Duchess of Norfolk, between 1734 and 1736. Mary was a devout Catholic and Jacobite sympathiser who had inherited a considerable fortune on the death of her husband in 1732. Despite her religious and political orientation, she chose to build a new London home in Piccadilly within the orbit of the Hanoverian court. This discussion contextualises the function and meaning of 16 Arlington Street within various episodes of the Duchess's life, ambitions and concerns. It also attempts a reconstruction of the original appearance of the building both in terms of its spatial layout and interior décor prior to twentieth-century alterations. By combining biography and architectural reconstruction, it elucidates how Mary navigated her image through the medium of domestic space.

Part Two: Locality

As noted above, chapters 3 and 4 examine two contrasting residential districts of the West End: Whitehall and the Burlington estate. For each of these case studies, I identified various prominent female inhabitants of the area, and focused on those who had left the richest archival trail. Both chapters consider how the built environment

shaped the neighbourhood and examine the ways in which residents were connected by bonds of friendship and kinship.

Chapter 3 looks at the Whitehall area, a twenty-three-acre site lying between the River Thames and St James's Park. Following the partial destruction of Whitehall Palace by fire in 1698, William III had moved the Court to St James's Palace, but the ruined site remained under Crown control. In the succeeding years, courtiers, politicians and wealthy widows competed to acquire building leases on the royal land, transforming it into an elite residential neighbourhood, benefiting from an unrivalled riverside location. My study foregrounds the experiences of Whitehall's female residents, many of whom were connected to the royal household, including the widowed Arabella Godfrey (1648-1730), former mistress of James II, and Jane, Countess of Portland, governess to the daughters of George II. It elucidates how residence in Whitehall provided such women with the opportunity to participate in public life and to reinforce their credentials as members of the aristocratic elite. However, it also explores some of the challenges associated with the crown lease system, including frequent disputes over boundaries between properties. The second half of the chapter focuses on the experience of two kinship groups located in Whitehall, both dominated by women. Drawing extensively on archival material, it thus highlights the important role of the London town house in women's maintenance of family relationships.

Chapter 4, turning to the Burlington estate, examines both Burlington House and the new housing development extending northwards from its garden (also known as the Ten Acre Close). Like the Whitehall area, the Burlington estate attracted a number of wealthy, influential women as residents during the first half of the century. But, in functioning as a pendant chapter to chapter 3, this study highlights the very

different pattern of development which characterised these two areas of London. Starting with a study of Burlington House itself, the chapter focuses on the elite women within the orbit of Lord Burlington, especially his mother, Juliana, and wife, Dorothy. It shows how these women established themselves as patronesses and hostesses, helping to build the reputation of Burlington House as a hub for artistic creativity. It then looks at some of the women who took up residence on the estate, exploring their motivations for living there, and the interwoven networks which connected the neighbourhood. These women included Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk (the erstwhile mistress of George II), who moved to 15 Savile Street following her dismissal from court, and the widowed Anne Ingram, dowager Viscountess Irwin, who commissioned her family friend, Nicholas Hawksmoor, to design the interior of her house at 5 New Burlington Street.

Part Three: Lineage

The final chapter focuses on three generations of women in the Wentworth family in relation to 5 St James's Square. It shows how the town house could play a vital role in promoting the dynastic concerns of a family, whilst also providing both a convenient base in London and a home. In particular, it demonstrates the ways in which wives, mothers and sisters could perform crucial roles both in enhancing and maintaining a family's image and power. Starting with the widowed Lady Isabella Wentworth (*c*.1649-1743), mother of Thomas, 1st Earl of Strafford, it explores her tireless efforts to find her son a 'noble' town house whilst he was on diplomatic duty in the Hague. It then examines the experiences of her daughter-in-law, Anne, 1st Countess of Strafford, who was entrusted with setting up home in St James's Square during her husband's absence. An important focus of this chapter is the preparation of the house for Anne's lying-in period associated with the birth of her first child. The chapter also considers

such women's roles or expectations as housekeepers, and issues around cohabitation, as Anne was joined in the household by both her grandmother and sister-in-law for extended periods of time. The last of the three women studied here is Anne Campbell, 2nd Countess of Strafford, who, conversely, adopted a relatively passive role in relation to the rebuilding, decoration and management of 5 St James's Square. Her case serves as an important reminder that some women lacked agency over the houses they occupied, or else willingly deferred to their husbands on such matters. However, such examples provide a foil to the numerous women who took advantage of the opportunity to build, purchase or embellish a house in London. For these women, a residence in the West End provided a vital stage on which to shape their image, enabling them to play an active role in elite society.

Part One: LIFE

Chapter 1

The London Town House of Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough

> After the Queen had given me the ground to build the house where I now am, the Duke of Marlborough was so good as to give me leave to make this house precisely as I liked to have it and to employ who I pleased, upon which I sent for Sr C[hristopher] Wren and told him I hoped it would be no great trouble to him to look after the building I was going to begin[116]

As this extract from one of her personal accounts indicates, Sarah Churchill (née Jennyns), Duchess of Marlborough (1660-1744), was a formidable architectural patron (fig.1.1). The 'house where I now am' referred to Marlborough House, the stately red-brick mansion located immediately to the east of the royal palace in St James's Park, built for Sarah to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren between 1709 and 1711. Her account makes it clear that she acted as the building's patron in her own right, with the blessing (but without the intervention) of her husband. Her attitude towards the illustrious Wren is striking. Not only does she refer to him as if a servant to be summoned at her will, but she also seems eager to play down his creative contribution: She was the procreator; he was merely 'looking after' the building. As this narrative continues, Sarah's domineering personality emerges even more strongly, especially when she recalls her various instructions to Wren. These included asking him to 'make

[116] Personal account of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, written from Marlborough House in 1721. Quoted in D. Green, *Blenheim Palace*, (London, 1951), p.106. I have been unable to locate the original manuscript at either the British Library or Blenheim Palace. Sarah wrote several such accounts, defending her conduct as Groom of the Stool, which she circulated to her friends.

the contracts reasonable and not as crown work'; to make the house 'strong, plain and convenient'; and, finally, to give his word that the building 'should not have the least resemblance of any thing in that called Blenheim which I had never liked'.[117] Sarah's preoccupation with avoiding excessive expenditure and her antipathy towards the impracticality of Blenheim Palace recur as issues of persisting concern in her personal writings. This has encouraged a reading of Marlborough House as a type of 'anti-Blenheim', when in fact a direct comparison between a town house, built on a constricted site, and such a vast country estate is surely impossible.[118] Furthermore, far from commenting on any simplicity, contemporary visitors to the house remarked on its magnificence. For example, John Macky referred to it as 'the Palace of the Duke of Marlborough', 'in every way answerable to the Grandeur of its Great Master', whilst Samuel Simpson described it as 'more like a palace than St James's'.[119] It therefore seems that Sarah's account tells us primarily how she *wished* the house to be received and understood; the reality was far more complex.

Few eighteenth-century women have received more attention from both scholars and writers of fiction than Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. However, despite such voluminous, and sometimes sensationalist, discussion of her life, little attention has been devoted to her London town house. An important exception to this is Lydia Hamlett's recent important work on Louis Laguerre's cycle of mural paintings that

[117] Quoted in Green, *Blenheim Palace*, p.106.

[118] See, for example, O. Field, *The Favourite: Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough* (London: Orion, 2018), p.216.

[119] J. Macky, *Journey Through England*, 3rd edn (London, 1724), p.191. In referring to the house as belonging to the Duke, Macky was most likely following the convention of the time whereby the male head of the household was identified as the property owner; S. Simpson, *The Agreeable English Historian: Or the Complete English Traveller…[etc]* 3 vols (London, 1746), vol. 3, p.592.

acknowledges the crucial role which Sarah played in their conception and design.[120] There are also several references to the house in Frances Harris's magisterial political biography of the Duchess, but the scope of Harris's research does not extend to a visual or spatial interpretation of the building.[121] Whilst greatly indebted to both these sources, this chapter offers a more holistic view of Marlborough House in terms of its architecture, interior decoration and function. Through careful analysis of surviving archival material, including Sarah's personal correspondence, an inventory taken in 1740 and newspaper reports, this chapter examines the extent to which Sarah was successful in manipulating the image of herself and her family through the fabric and decoration of the house.

The building itself is a rare example of a surviving London town house from the period despite having undergone significant alterations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including the addition of two upper storeys (figs 1.2 and 1.3).[122] During the Duchess's lifetime (as now), the house was accessed from Pall Mall to the north, but its forecourt was screened from the street by a row of terraced houses (fig.1.4). Consequently, the south-facing façade of the house, overlooking St James's Park, constituted the most visible front of the building. It is this aspect which is represented in Charles Grignion's etching of 1761 after a painting by Samuel Wale

[120] L. Hamlett, 'Rupture Through Realism: Sarah Churchill and Louis Laguerre's Murals at Marlborough House', in M. Hallett, N. Llewellyn, and M. Myrone, eds, *Court, Country, City: British Art and Architecture, 1660-1735,* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018), pp.195-216. Amy Boyington also included a discussion of the Duchess's role as the architectural patron of Marlborough House in her PhD thesis. Boyington, 'Maids, Wives and Widows', pp.123-31.

[121] F. Harris, A *Passion for Government: The Life of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[122] The house remained in the Marlborough family until 1817 when it returned to the Crown. Since 1959 it has provided the home to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

(fig.1.5). This shows a substantial, two-storey building extending across thirteen bays, its brick façade articulated by channelled quoins of masonry. Meanwhile, the north front of the main block, overlooking the *cour d'honneur*, closely resembled the garden front, although it was divided into only nine bays. Two further wings, linked to the main block by a simple colonnade, extended across opposite sides of the courtyard (fig.1.6).

The chapter is divided into four sections: Part 1 contextualises the construction of Marlborough House in the personal history of the Duchess, considering her motivations and ambitions in building a London mansion right next door to the royal palace at the age of forty-nine. This section also considers the unusual level of independence which she enjoyed as an architectural patron, given her married status. Part 2 focuses on the design of the building and Sarah's interaction with Wren and his workmen during the building's construction. Part 3 turns to the interior decoration of the building, attempting to recreate the visitor's experience of the rooms on the principal storey. Finally, part 4 explores the extent to which Sarah realised her ambitions for the house by illuminating its changing function over the three decades of her occupancy.

Part 1: Background and Biographical context:

Following Queen Anne's accession to the throne in March 1702, Sarah had quickly become the most powerful and highly paid woman at court. Her roles as Mistress of the Robes, Groom of the Stool, Keeper of the Privy Purse and Ranger of Windsor Park

had brought her a combined income of £6,000 per annum.[123] Moreover, in her capacity as Ranger of Windsor Park, she had been granted ownership of Windsor Lodge, the parkland residence which she had coveted throughout King William's reign.[124] When Sarah's husband had been raised to the dukedom in December 1702, the Queen had awarded the couple a pension of £5,000 per annum for Sarah's life, thereby furnishing the new Duke and Duchess with the means to maintain a lifestyle in accordance with their newly exalted rank. At this time, the Marlboroughs owned two substantial country houses: Windsor Lodge, as noted, and Sarah's family home, Holywell House, a Tudor mansion near St Albans in Hertfordshire. In addition, Sarah had her own extensive set of lodgings in the south-eastern corner of St James's Palace as well as enjoying the use of apartments at Kensington Palace.[125] However, in 1705, in recognition of the Duke's great victory over the forces of Louis XIV at the Battle of Blenheim (1704), the Queen granted him the royal manor of Woodstock by an act of Parliament, promising that the Treasury would fund the construction of a grand new house there.[126]

Such rapid accumulation of wealth inevitably led to resentment and public censorship, many considering that the Marlboroughs were motivated by greed and self-

[123] Sarah's income from these offices was paid into a goldsmith's account in her own name and held quite independently of her husband. Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.87.

[124] Sarah oversaw various improvements at Windsor Lodge between 1703 and 1704, costing over £2,500. See J. Roberts, *Royal Landscape: The Gardens and Parks of Windsor* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1997), p.334.

[125] The lodgings had been granted to Sarah in 1695 by William III but continued to serve as her London residence until she moved into Marlborough House.

[126] The Battle of Blenheim was a decisive battle in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14) between the allied troops, led by Marlborough, and the forces of Louis XIV. It took place on 13 August 1704 on the north bank of the Danube near the small village of Blindheim (Blenheim).

aggrandisement.[127] It seems that Sarah, in particular, was concerned to counter such charges. As suggested by Marcia Pointon, one way in which she did this was by adopting an image of noble simplicity in her own dress.[128] For example, the diarist, John Evelyn, drew attention to her appearance at the Blenheim victory celebrations in 1704, when she sat in the royal coach, dressed in 'a very plain garment', alongside the richly bejewelled Queen.[129] The Duke, however, appears to have made no such attempts to deflect charges of venality. In engaging Sir John Vanbrugh to design and build Blenheim Palace in 1705, he embarked on one of the most costly and extravagant building projects of the eighteenth century (fig.1.7).[130] Although the Blenheim project was funded by regular grants from the royal Treasury, this arrangement placed Sarah under personal pressure, since the continued flow of these funds was partly dependent on her good relationship with the Queen.

The actual building of Blenheim, a project lasting almost twenty years, proved to be an ongoing source of frustration to Sarah. When she paid her first visit to view the building works at Woodstock in 1706, she was quick to express her displeasure. Her chief objections to the building were its colossal size, its impractical layout, and the inadequate supply of light to the basement.[131] She consequently insisted on several changes being made to the fabric of the building which were duly carried out in

[127] Weil, *Political Passions*, p.196.

[128] M. Pointon, 'Material Manoeuvres: Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough and the Power of Artefacts', *Art History*, 32:3 (June 2009), 490-91.

[129] *Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. W. Bray, 4 vols (London: Bickers & Son, 1879), vol. 3, p.169: 7 September 1704.

[130] Legard convincingly argues that the Duke 'actively pursued' rather than 'passively received' the royal gift of the Woodstock estate. J. Legard, 'Vanbrugh, Blenheim Palace and the Meanings of Baroque Architecture' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2013), p.71.

[131] Legard, 'Vanbrugh' p.163.

1707.[132] However, her early dissatisfaction with Blenheim was only the precursor to later arguments in her highly combative relationship with Vanbrugh over what she perceived to be his grotesquely ambitious schemes. In his PhD thesis on Blenheim Palace, James Legard demonstrated that Blenheim was radically redesigned during 1707, most likely with the Duke's consent but without the Duchess's knowledge. As a result, expenditure on the building reached a record level at precisely the time that the Marlborough House project was being conceived.[133] Sarah's impotence in the face of the extravagant schemes of her husband and Vanbrugh almost certainly had an impact on her approach to the building of her town house – not least in her employment of a different architect.

From around 1707, Sarah's relationship with Queen Anne began to disintegrate. This was caused in part by Sarah's relentless and unwelcome attempts to impose her political views on the Queen. Whilst Anne had an aversion towards party politics, Sarah 'openly and ardently identified with the Whigs' and saw it as her duty to promote their cause.[134] Moreover, the Queen was becoming increasingly attached to the new favourite, Abigail Masham, a fervent supporter of the Tories, who was much influenced by her cousin, Robert Harley, then Secretary of State. Abigail therefore posed a major threat to Sarah's political ambitions, prompting her to behave in a jealous and vindictive manner.[135] As Abigail's influence over the Queen intensified,

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[132] Although her concerns about the building's size were ignored, steps were taken to reduce the thickness of the walls of the state rooms and to add additional windows to the basement. Legard, 'Vanbrugh', p.163.

[133] Costs had risen from £30,000 per annum in 1706 and 1707, to £36,600 in 1708, and to the vast sum of £42,000 in 1709. Legard, 'Vanbrugh', p.77.

[134] Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.2.

[135] For a full discussion on the breakdown in Sarah and Anne's relationship, see Harris, *Passion for Government*, pp.141-78.

Sarah found her co-residence with the pair at St James's Palace increasingly untenable. In one of her letters, Sarah complained that Abigail's apartments were 'just by [her] bed's head', whilst the lodgings below hers were occupied by Abigail's associates who made 'such a noise and smoke and stink in the lodgings' that it was impossible for her to remain there any longer.[136] Consequently, her building of a new town house can be seen as, in part, borne of necessity. Although not formally expelled from her lodgings until January 1711, it seems that Sarah was eager to escape the inconveniences of living in the palace by establishing her own London residence.

The granting of the lease

Despite her growing disenchantment with Sarah, the Queen felt obliged to honour a long-standing promise to grant her a lease on an area known as the Friary in the grounds of the royal palace which was duly awarded on 31 August 1708.[137] The Friary had formerly belonged to Catherine of Braganza, the widow of Charles II, but had reverted to the Crown following Catherine's death in 1705 (figs 1.8 and 1.9).[138] The site consequently had potent associations with queenly status and influence.[139] Having acquired a plot quite literally next door to the palace for the purpose of building a new house, it seems likely that Sarah anticipated her own return to royal favour.

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[136] Quoted in F. Harris, *General in Winter: The Marlborough-Godolphin Friendship and the Reign of Anne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p.237.

[137] Sarah proclaimed that she would not have accepted it, 'but that it was promised her long before the quarrel with Mrs Masham'. HMC *Manuscripts of the Duke Portland* (London, 1891), vol.4, p.509: E. Lewis to Robert Harley, 22 October 1708.

[138] *Calendar of Treasury Books*, vol. 22, pp.374-82: 31 August 1708. Catherine had left England in April 1692. She died in Portugal in 1705.

[139] For a discussion of Catherine of Braganza's influence as a cultural patron, see E. Corp, 'Catherine of Braganza and cultural politics', in C. Campbell Orr, ed. *Queenship in Britain, 1660-1837: Royal Patronage, court culture and dynastic politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp.53-73.

Any optimism felt by the Duchess about regaining influence over the Queen was greatly encouraged by her close friend and political ally, Arthur Maynwaring (1668-1712), a leading member of the Junto, the most uncompromising wing of the Whig party. From 1708 until his death in November 1712, Maynwaring, whom Sarah jokingly dubbed her 'secretary', maintained a prolific correspondence with the Duchess, offering her advice couched in elaborately flattering terms.[140] He went to considerable lengths to persuade Sarah to maintain her position at court, believing that she had a crucial role to perform as the 'visible guardian of Whig interests' there.[141] He also claimed that, by living as the Queen's neighbour, Sarah would be able to regain her influence over Anne, 'supported by Friends & a strong party in the right interest'.[142]

Maynwaring was closely involved with the building of Marlborough House. Responding to Sarah's concerns about the restricted size of the plot, he conducted his own survey by pacing out its dimensions. His subsequent letter concluded: 'if the house be set in an equal line with St James's (which I believe will be best in many respects) you will have about fifty yards for your out courts, of which you may take two for stables & all manner of offices'.[143] Two days later, he wrote again, this time extolling the exceptional beauty of the house's proposed location:

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[140] Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.142

[141] *Ibid.* See Cartwright, ed. *Wentworth Papers 1705-1739* (London: Wyman & Sons, 1883), pp.105-06: Peter Wentworth to Thomas Wentworth, 30 January 1710: 'the town says it has been some time that the Dutchess has called her gold key [the symbol of office] Mr Mannerring key for tis by his perswation she has kept it so long.'

[142] BL Add MS 61461, f.30: Maynwaring to SM Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (hereafter SM) [April-May 1710]. See also Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.142.

[143] BL Add MS 61459, f.90: Arthur Maynwaring to SM [7 September 1708]. The Countess du Roy refers to Catherine of Braganza. The plot described by Maynwaring corresponds to figure 1.9.

> if the House be set in an equal line with her Majesties Palace, it will have a view down the Middle Walk of her Garden, which will be better than that of the green one, & being remov'd from all manner of dust, & from the smoke of the houses in the Pell-Mell, you will live & sleep as it were in the middle of that great Garden.[144]

It is particularly interesting to note Maynwaring's repetition of the phrase 'in an equal line' in these two letters referring to the house's position in relation to the palace. This suggests a synchronisation with the palace, indicating that its mistress would be aligned with royal power.

The Duke, however, was initially resistant to the idea of building a new town house on the chosen site. He was particularly concerned that the proposed plot was too small. On 1 July 1708, he wrote to Sarah: 'It is not a proper place for a great house, and I am sure when you have built a little one you will not like it […] for it is certainly more advisable to buy a house than to build one.'[145] Although Sarah ignored this advice, it seems that she did share his reservations about the size of the plot. She therefore petitioned the Queen to issue her with a new lease in exchange for the first. This was accordingly granted in May 1709, providing her with two-and-three-quarter

[144] BL Add MS 61459, f.93: Maynwaring to SM, Thursday morning [9 September 1708]. The idea of being able to simultaneously enjoy the beauty of the country and the conveniences of the town was a frequent trope in commentary on the development of eighteenth-century London. See for example J. Ralph*, A Critical Review of the Publick Buildings…[etc]* (London, 1734), p.33.

[145] Duke of Marlborough to SM, 1 July 1708, quoted in A.T. Bolton and H. Duncan Hendry, *The Wren Society Volumes*, 20 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924-43), vol. 7, p.226. The Duke's reluctance for Sarah to take on another building project was understandable, given the attention required by the ongoing project at Woodstock.

acres of additional ground, formerly 'in the custody of Henry Boyle'.[146] This second lease brought the overall plot size to just over four acres. Figure 1.10 shows the ground plan of the house and gardens in 1744, indicating the areas covered by the two grants (1708 and 1709).[147]

Part 2: Designing and building Marlborough House

As already established in the introduction to this chapter, the design, construction and decoration of Marlborough House were all entirely overseen by the Duchess. This was unusual, since married women rarely acted as architectural patrons in their own right without any intervention from their husbands who, under marital law, had legal control of their wife's property.[148] Most aspiring architectural patronesses, such as Mary, 8th Duchess of Norfolk, discussed in the following chapter, had to wait until the death of their husbands before they could indulge such ambitions. Although the Duke of Marlborough initially opposed his wife's project, claiming that the building would cost 'much more money than the thing is worth', he eventually agreed to make a contribution of £7,000 'on condition that the house should go along with the dukedom after [Sarah's] death', rather than allowing her to dispose of it at will.[149] Whilst the

[146] *Calendar of Treasury Books*, vol 23, pp.179-92: 30 May 1709. Henry Boyle later became the Duchess's neighbour when he built Carlton House on the adjoining land in 1714.

[147] This plan shows that the plot granted in 1708 measured 1 acre, 1 rood and 30 perches. The additional land (added in 1709) measured 2 acres, 2 roods and 39 perches.

[148] On marriage a woman became a *femme couverte*, thus relinquishing her rights over property to her husband. See S. Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also Boyington, 'Maids, Wives and Widows', p.123.

[149] Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.149. By a special act of Parliament passed in 1706, the Marlborough titles were destined to pass to the Duke's daughters in priority of birth and their male heirs. The couple's only son to survive infancy was John, Marquess of Blandford, who had died in 1703 (fig.1.33).

house was under construction, the Duke was largely absent on his campaigns in northern Europe. However, his letters dating from the summer of 1709 show that he responded supportively to his wife's updates on the progress of the building work:

> I am glad of the general applause your house meets with, since I am sure it gives you pleasure, and for the same reason be not uneasy that it costs more money than you thought it would, for upon my word I shall think nothing too much for the making you easy.[150]

The Duke's choice of language ('*your* house' and 'gives *you* pleasure') clearly underscores the fact that this was very much Sarah's building project rather than his own. Moreover, his professed eagerness to make his wife 'easy' perhaps alluded to Sarah's reaction to recent developments at Woodstock. It was in the middle of 1709 that she had finally learnt the true extent of his and Vanbrugh's aggrandisement of Blenheim.[151]

As the favoured architect of the Duke, Vanbrugh appears to have taken offence at being overlooked for the Marlborough House project, perhaps failing to realise that it was to be managed exclusively by the Duchess.[152] Aside from the various 'difficulties' Vanbrugh had caused her over the building work at Blenheim, Sarah had good reason to prefer Wren as the architect of her new town house.[153] Most obviously, he was the foremost architect of the age, having served as surveyor-general of the royal works for forty years. Moreover, he already had a particular association with the site of

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[150] Duke of Marlborough to SM, 18 July 1709, quoted in Bolton and Duncan Hendry, *Wren Society*, vol. 7, p.226.

[151] Legard, 'Vanbrugh', p.230.

[152] *Ibid.*, p.88.

[153] See BL Add MS 61459, f.118: Maynwaring to SM, 18 Oct [1708].

St James's Palace, having designed and built a new wing to the complex for Queen Anne in 1703. Given his advanced age (seventy-seven), Wren enlisted his son, also named Christopher (hereafter referred to as Wren the younger), to help supervise the building work.[154] In *Vitruvius Britannicus,* the design of Marlborough House is attributed to Wren the younger (fig.1.14). [155] However, as suggested by Arthur Searle, this is likely to have been an attempt by Sir Christopher to promote his son's career by crediting him with a prestigious commission. The Duchess herself never acknowledged Wren the younger's contribution to the design, tending to be rather dismissive about him. Maynwaring was most likely responding to her scorn when he described Wren the younger as 'a sad little knave' in one of his letters to her.[156]

Although a privately-owned property, Marlborough House's proximity to the palace and the decision to align its south-facing façade with the royal buildings indicate that it was intended to be interpreted in relation to St James's. John Sturt's print of 1714 shows the view of the palace and part of Marlborough House from the park (fig.1.11). As noted by Wolf Burchard, the façade of Wren's eleven-bay extension to the palace, seen on the left, was characterised by its 'sobriety'. [157] It thus seems likely that the south front of Marlborough House was intended to harmonise with Wren's earlier structure. Both red-brick buildings formed strong rectangular

[154] According to Lisa Jardine, Wren the younger lacked ambition but proved the ideal amanuensis and facilitator to his father. L. Jardine, *On a Grander Scale: The Outstanding Career of Sir Christopher Wren* (London: Harper Collins, 2002), p.430. See also A. Searle, 'A Pleasing Example of Skill in Old Age', *British Library Journal,* 8:1 (Spring 1982), p.37.

[155] Searle, 'A Pleasing Example', p.7.

[156] BL Add MS 61461, f.115: Maynwaring to SM [9 May 1711].

[157] Burchard notes that Wren's extension of St James's Palace strongly differed from the new range he had designed for William III at Hampton Court. W. Burchard, 'St James's Palace: George II's and Queen Caroline's Principal London Residence', *The Court Historian,* 16:2 (2011), pp.179-80.

blocks, pierced by tall windows. Located between them were the older palace buildings, their asymmetrical arrangement indicating the long and complex history of the royal site. Wren's two structures could thus be described as book-ending the Tudor buildings. At the same time, the style of Marlborough House was clearly differentiated from that of the palace by its channelled blocks of masonry and its balustraded roofline, contrasting with the crenellations crowning the palace buildings. The house's position and design clearly invited such comparison between the two buildings, their owners and what each represented.[158]

As well as considering the aesthetic of the palace itself, Sarah looked to the nearby Buckingham House for inspiration in the design of her new building. This grand town house, located at the west end of the Mall, had been built for John Sheffield, 1st Duke of Buckingham (1648-1721), by William Winde between 1702 and 1705 (figs 1.12 and 1.13).[159] Writing in June 1709, Peter Wentworth noted that, since Marlborough House was to be 'built after the model of the Duke of Bucks', Sarah had taken the trouble to establish a new rapport with the Buckinghams ('where lately there had been a coolness'): 'the Duke and his Duchess with her Grace of M[arlborough] visset their work very often together.'[160] Like Marlborough House, the Duke of Buckingham's red-brick mansion consisted of a rectangular central block with two

[158] The gardens of Marlborough House were laid out by Queen Anne's gardener, Henry Wise, thus further emphasising Sarah's royal connections.

[159] Colen Campbell claimed that the house was 'conducted' rather than 'designed' by Winde, making it likely that Winde was carrying out the design of another architect (probably William Talman) at Buckingham House. See H. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840*, 3rd edn (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995), p.1068. Buckingham House was bought by George III in 1762 after which it served as the residence of Queen Charlotte. It was altered and enlarged by William Chambers, 1762-69.

[160] Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p.89: Peter Wentworth to Thomas Wentworth, 7 June 1709.

principal storeys and flanking service wings. For Sarah, it likely provided a model of a fitting town residence for someone of her rank and importance. However, as noted by Baron de Pollnitz, Buckingham House was 'infinitely better situate[d]', its generously proportioned courtyard containing 'a fine Waterwork' opening towards the canal in St James's Park.[161]

Whilst the situation of Buckingham House meant it could be viewed from several different angles, only the south-facing elevation of Marlborough House was clearly visible. It is worth noting that Wren's design for this elevation, reproduced in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, differed from the actual building in terms of its ornamentation (figs 1.14 and 1.5). Based on Grignion's 1761 etching of the house, it appears that the sculptures in each of the four niches, the elaborate sculptural centrepiece, and the urns punctuating the roofline seen in Wren's drawing did not form part of the building as executed. A possible explanation for this change is that Sarah decided to make the house more restrained after building work had commenced. She may have been responding to the intensification of public criticism directed towards both her and her husband. Fuelled by the Tories, damaging rumours had been circulating that the Duke was deliberately prolonging the war against Louis XIV to aggrandise and enrich himself and his family.[162] Many of these attacks were aimed directly at Sarah. For example, on 23 November 1710, Jonathan Swift published an article in the *Examiner* in which he compared Sarah to a lady's maid who had appropriated large sums of her

[161] De Pollnitz, *Memoirs*, p.437

[162] See Weil, *Political* Passions, p.198: The charge was first made in 1708 in a pamphlet attributed to Robert Harley, entitled *Plain English*.

mistress's money.[163] That Sarah took this negative publicity very much to heart is evident from a letter she wrote to David Hamilton, the Queen's physician, on 28 November, describing the insinuation as 'too much for human nature to bear.'[164] However, it seems there may have been some truth in it. As noted by Edward Gregg, Sarah initially borrowed the money to secure the lease for Marlborough House from the Queen's funds, without first gaining permission, showing the extent to which she had come to rely on her privileged position in the royal household.[165]

Another feature of the park side elevation which merits attention is the height of the windows, especially those on the ground floor which extend almost from floor to ceiling like the central doorway.[166] Sarah is known to have had a passion for light rooms, and these windows would also have offered exceptionally fine views across the park.[167] However, the profusion of large windows could also be related to Sarah's ideas about transparency and public virtue, especially since they overlooked the public promenade on the Mall (fig.1.15). Maynwaring encourages such an interpretation in

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[163] *Works of Rev Jonathan Swift*, 19 vols (London, 1801), vol. 3, p.34. The Examiner was a newspaper edited by Jonathan Swift between 2 November 1710 and 1714 which promoted a Tory perspective on politics.

[164] Quoted in F. Harris, 'Accounts of the Conduct of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough 1704-1742', *British Library Journal*, 8:1 (1982), p.13.

[165] E. Gregg, *Queen Anne* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2014), pp.278-79. The Queen's funds were held by the same goldsmith who held the Duke and Duchess's current accounts. From early on Sarah had fallen into the habit of using the Queen's money to supply temporary shortages of her own. See also Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.155.

[166] Note that the upper sections of these windows were later bricked over as part of the nineteenth-century alterations (see fig.1.3).

[167] In a letter to Diana Russell dated 21 July 1732, Sarah expressed her criticism of 'the architects of former times' by writing: 'And I observe one aversion they have, which is light, and that is the reverse of my inclination.' G. Scott Thomson, ed. *Letters of a Grandmother 1732-1735* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1943), p.54; K. Downes, *Sir John Vanbrugh: A Biography* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1987), p.308.

one of his letters to Sarah, in which he recounts the example of Drusus, a Roman general, who had 'a House which his neighbours could look into'. When his workman had offered to remedy this 'inconvenience', Drusus responded: 'No […] thanks to the good Gods, I have no need of that, but if you can contrive it so that all the Town may look into every Room I have & see what I am doing, I will give thee as much more for that.'[168] The fact that this letter was written whilst Marlborough House was under construction suggests that Maynwaring meant to flatter Sarah through a comparison with the virtuous Roman general. Like Drusus, Sarah could open herself up to public scrutiny, since she had nothing to hide.[169] Maynwaring was also likely trying to reassure Sarah at a time of much negative publicity.

The Duchess's strong opinions about the house's design were not limited to its exterior. She also had clear views about its interior layout, believing convenience and practicality to be of paramount importance. The plan of Marlborough House roughly adhered to the standard formal plan, as described by Mark Girouard and also employed at Buckingham House, consisting of a hall and saloon on a central axis and distinct apartments on either side (figs 1.16 and 1.17).[170] In one of Maynwaring's more sycophantic letters, he extols Sarah's superior skills as an architectural planner over those of Vanbrugh:

> the best builders […] form their Plans so as to contain the most Conveniency in the least Room […] According to this Account […] yr Grace is the best Builder

[168] BL Add MS 61461, f.61: Maynwaring to SM, n.d. [1710].

[169] As noted by Rachel Weil, Maynwaring and Sarah often imagined Anne and Abigail Masham, by contrast, retreating into enclosed, hidden spaces, suggesting they were ashamed of themselves, Weil, *Political Passions* p.208.

[170] See Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p.154. The idea of the formal plan had its roots in the Roman villa, the hall and saloon corresponding to the vestibulum and atrium.

> in the world; & Mr Vanbrook the worst. For in your House there is not one foot of Ground lost. [171]

Allowing for Maynwaring's evident toadyism, it still seems highly likely that Sarah gave Wren precise instructions about her preferences for the layout of Marlborough House especially since she is known to have made significant changes to the interior arrangement of Blenheim Palace. She described these alterations to her friend, Jael Boscawen, in a letter written in 1719: 'I have only taken away passages to make conveniences […] Sir John's Inclenation was to have the whole principle floor with vast great rooms & walks all around them like a church, which made it quite impossible to live in the hous'. [172] However, it is worth noting that space was at a premium in the town house, making its efficient use a necessity. Whilst the main block of Marlborough House covered an area measuring 10,206 square feet, the main block of Blenheim Palace covered an area of almost 47,000 square feet.[173]

Entrance /Approach to house

Ceremonies of arrival and departure were important considerations in the design of aristocratic town houses. At Buckingham House, for example, carriages could sweep into the grand forecourt from St James's Park, publicly reinforcing the elevated rank of the house's owners, whilst, at Burlington House, James Gibbs designed a theatrical colonnaded forecourt for the dowager Countess of Burlington around 1715 (see chapter 4). The approach – or lack of it – to Marlborough House caused Sarah particular dissatisfaction. As noted in a Treasury Book entry of 1709, the plot abutted 'the backsides of several houses fronting the High Street called the Pall Mall' to the

[171] BL Add MS 61459, f.28: Maynwaring to SM, [summer 1709].

[172] BL Evelyn MS 78530, f.154: SM to Jael Boscawen, 27 August 1719.

[173] Legard, 'Vanbrugh', p.159.

north, thus necessitating an axial entry (fig.1.4).[174] Indeed, when the site of Marlborough House is compared with that of Buckingham House, Sarah's sense of her own approach as inferior is understandable. Maynwaring went to considerable lengths to help her resolve this problem, enlisting the assistance of Nicholas Hawksmoor, who had been working for Sarah at Blenheim Palace:

> I will try to morrow to get Mr Hawksmore to make one just as I wou'd have it in which the whole way from the Street shall be taken, & the outward Gate placed where I wou'd hav it, as far off as Mrs Cowpers Lodgings, which will take in the End of the Church, which is very handsom & will appear like a Chappel to your House.[175]

It seems that the entrance to the property, as shown in John Rocque's map of 1746, did indeed follow Maynwaring's proposed route (fig.1.18). It is particularly interesting to note his intention that the approach should 'take in' the royal chapel, thereby encouraging the visitor to experience Inigo Jones's iconic building as if it were part of Sarah's property (figs 1.18 and 1.19).[176] This certainly indicates grandiose ambitions. Although the grandest country estates often had their own private chapels, it was highly unusual for a town house to have one.[177]

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[174] *Calendar of Treasury Books*, vol 23, pp.179-92: 30 May 1709.

[175] BL Add MS 61460, f.71: Maynwaring to SM [October 1709]..

[176] The Chapel Royal was built by Inigo Jones for Queen Henrietta Maria, 1623-25. During the reign of William III, it was granted to French and Dutch speaking Protestants who had settled in London to escape persecution following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

[177] Chapels were sometimes incorporated into the interiors of recusant town houses. Clare Haynes notes that Norfolk House, as built by the Catholic 9th Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, contained its own chapel on the north side of the ground floor. C. Haynes, 'Of her Making: The Cultural Practice of Mary, Duchess of Norfolk', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 31: 1/2 (2012), p.82; See also A. Ricketts, *English Country House Chapel* (Reading: Spire Books, 2008).

Despite the combined efforts of both Maynwaring and Hawksmoor, it appears that Sarah's dissatisfaction with the axial entrance into the main courtyard remained a persistent concern over the coming decades. According to a newspaper report, during the 1730s, she set out to purchase and demolish 'three decay'd houses contiguous to Marlborough House in Pall Mall' so she could create 'a spacious courtyard' to her property.[178] She was therefore prepared to go to considerable lengths to achieve her desired entrance, whilst showing little concern how this would impact on her neighbours.[179] About a year later she attempted to purchase a further property on Pall Mall, which was being kept as an ale house, on the grounds that it caused 'a great Nuisance, they putting out all Manner of Nastiness in the Way that I must go by to my House.'[180] However, despite these measures, the irregular northern boundary of her plot, as recorded in 1744, suggests that Sarah never fully realised the grand entrance she desired (fig.1.10).[181]

The Construction of Marlborough House

Unlike most elite patrons, who trusted their architects and surveyors to carry out their building work in accordance with approved plans, Sarah appears to have had no such confidence in Wren, his son, or his workmen. Such was the depth of her engagement in the actual construction of Marlborough House that she intervened at almost every

[178] *London Evening Post*, 21-24 October 1732.

[179] Sarah's willingness to purchase and destroy existing properties to ameliorate her own entrance bears comparison with country estate owners, such as the Earl of Leicester at Holkham Hall, who demolished the village of Holkham to facilitate his plans.

[180] BL RP 8309/2: Copy of a letter to an unknown recipient, signed by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 12 August 1733.

[181] Robert and James Dodsley claimed that Robert Walpole deliberately jeopardised Sarah's plans by purchasing one of the offending houses on Pall Mall. R. and J. Dodsley, *London and its environs described*, 6 vols (London, 1761), vol.3, p.263.

stage. As Maynwaring's letter, written in 1709 reveals, she even insisted on inspecting the digging of the foundations:

> your new House […] requires your immediate care & inspection, for they begun yesterday to measure the ground for sinking the foundations of the wings […] I rememberd full well that your Grace order'd me not to let them dig any more, till you came hither.[182]

Moreover, in a letter written to her friend, Lady Cowper, during the summer of 1709, Sarah stated: 'I shall be so much in town this summer […] for tho I am not an architect I find we can't be long from my building without the danger of having a window or a door or something or other that one does not like'.[183] Maynwaring even went so far as to suggest that Sarah's position of overall authority in relation to the project was comparable to the role of her husband as a great military commander:

> Your Grace sits at the head of the work, & directs all the inferiour Ranks of officers, from Mr Wren to those that carry the Morter, who are all alike employ'd onely to finish what you have so well contriv'd.[184]

Of particular value in assessing Sarah's management of the building work is a cache of about forty documents among the Blenheim papers at the British Library. This includes letters written by Wren and Wren the younger, together with drafts of Sarah's replies. As is clear from Sir Christopher's letter of 23 September 1710, Sarah had placed particular emphasis on the need to avoid excessive expenditure, prompting him to reply 'I hope every thing will be carryed on to Your Grace's satisfaction and

[182] BL Add MS 61459, f.171: Maynwaring to SM [4 June 1709].

[183] HRO Panshanger MSS F63, f.57: SM to Lady Cowper [summer 1709].

[184] BL Add MS 61459, f.28: Maynwaring to SM, [summer 1709].

with all the frugality soe large a Fabric will admit of according to the directions your Grace hath allready given'.[185] Not only does this reveal a note of impatience about Sarah's repeated insistence on 'frugality', but it also underscores the implicit contradictions in the commission. On the one hand, Sarah wished to build a great mansion as befitted her elevated rank and position in society. On the other, she was eager to demonstrate financial restraint in her management of the project. Unfortunately for Wren and the workmen, Sarah appears to have placed the burden of the need for economy chiefly on them.

The latter stages of the building work at Marlborough House coincided with Sarah's dismissal from all her royal offices on 18 January 1711, a situation which is likely to have exacerbated her ill humour as well as forcing her to address her compromised financial position.[186] As a result, she placed ever greater pressure on Sir Christopher and his son to reduce the building expenses. Wren the younger was constantly at pains to assure her that the estimates of the joiner, carpenter, painter and pavior were as low as they could reasonably afford.[187] However, the Duchess maintained her intractable stance, eventually taking the decision to replace Wren's workmen with a team of her own choosing. In July 1711, Sir Christopher wrote to Sarah in a tone of dignified resignation: 'I am very well pleased that you will Contract your self, for what is yett to be done, but I beg of you that it may be as well performed and that you would think a few pence may sometimes be ill saved'.[188] This suggests that he still felt some pride about and/or responsibility for the project.

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[185] BL Add MS 61357, f.3: Sir Christopher Wren to SM, 23 September 1710.

[186] Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.179. Sarah's loans from the Privy purse had not yet been repaid.

[187] See letters from Wren the younger to SM including BL Add MS 61357, f.8: 8 March 1711; f.23: 15 March 1711; f.27: 28 March 1711 and f.37: 2 April 1711.

[188] BL Add MS 61357, f.68: Sir Christopher Wren to SM, 14 July 1711.

So damaging were the Duchess's complaints to the reputation of the workmen that they eventually resorted to publishing a statement which appeared in the *Post Boy* on 27 December 1712 (fig.1.20).[189] In this, they vehemently refuted a 'false, malicious, and scandalous report […] that in the building of Marlborough House, the Surveyor had made advantages to himself by gratuities from the workmen. Instead, they claimed, 'they did on the surveyor's account submit to less prices than they would otherwise have done.' This makes it clear that, however unreasonable Sarah's accusations may have been, she was a figure of considerable influence in society. The careers of such workmen were heavily dependent on recommendations from aristocratic patrons. To be discredited by so formidable a figure as the Duchess of Marlborough could pose a threat to their very livelihood.[190]

It is interesting to note that, despite Sarah's elaborate attempts to minimise expenditure on the construction of Marlborough House, she later set on record that it had cost 'betwixt fourty & fifty thousand pounds' to complete the house and garden.[191] This was an extortionate sum by the standards of the time; for example the main block of Buckingham House (1702-05) allegedly cost around £8,000 to build, although this figure did not include the outer wings and gardens.[192] In an attempt to defend her

[189] The *Post Boy* was a tri-weekly newspaper with a circulation of 3,650 in 1712. M. Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.384.

[190] Craftsmen working in the capital depended on the competition between aristocratic patrons. See A. Aymonino and M. Guerci, 'The Refurbishment of Northumberland House' in Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*, p.82.

[191] BL Add MS 61425, f.98: Vindication concerning the Duchess's conduct.

[192] Pearce, *London's Mansions*, p.53: 'The cost [of building the main block of Buckingham House] was £7000, to which has to be added £1000 for the impressive stone staircase'. It is also worth noting that George III paid £28,000 for Buckingham House when he bought it from Charles Sheffield in 1762. Georgian Papers Online (http://gpp.rct.uk., January 2020): RA GEO/ADD/19/29: 'An Account of the money payable for the purchase of Buckingham House…', 1762.

expenditure on the project, Sarah added, 'it is not really so extravagant as it appears, because it is the strongest and best house that ever was built'.[193] Ever mindful of her reputation, she thus sought to defend such expense by extolling the superior quality of the building's structure. As she claimed on another occasion: 'I never liked any Building so much for the shew & vanity of it.'[194] However, as the following section will show, she also spared little expense on the furnishing and interior décor.

Part 3: The Interiors of Marlborough House

During the summer and autumn of 1711, Sarah devoted considerable time and energy to the interiors of her new house. Her letter to Lady Cowper, written in June 1711, shows her characteristic absorption in the project: 'there is scarce a day that I do not pass six Hours in measuring pictures to see what place they will fit, & what must be bespoke in order to finish this House'.[195] She was particularly eager that the house should be ready for her husband's return from his campaigns on the continent, planned for November of that year. However, she evidently took great pleasure in the project. In early October, she informed Lady Cowper that she would soon travel from Holywell (her residence in St Albans) to London, 'called to a very pleasant work, the furnishing my new House'.[196] A few weeks later, on 23 October, she reported: 'I lay last night in my new house & was so delighted that I thought there should have been some

[193] 'An Account of what the Grant of Marlborough House has cost the Duke and Dutchess of Marlborough.' Quoted in Bolton and Duncan Hendry, *Wren Society,* vol. 7, p.227.

[194] BL Add MS 61422, f.173: Account of the Duchess of Marlborough.

[195] HRO Panshanger MSS, F228, p.84: SM to Lady Cowper, 23 June 1711.

[196] HRO Panshanger MSS, F228, p.105: SM to Lady Cowper, 3 October 1711.

extraordinary Ceremony, as a Sack posset or throwing the Stocking; it is just possible to live in it above stairs.'[197]

During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the interiors of Marlborough House underwent a number of alterations in terms of their layout and décor (fig.1.3). We are therefore strongly reliant on two pieces of surviving evidence to reconstruct their original appearance: the ground floor plan as it appeared in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, which provides an accurate record of the room layout as built, and the inventory of the house which was personally dictated by Sarah in 1740 (fig.1.16).[198] However, it is important to note that the inventory recorded the contents of the house almost thirty years after its completion. By this date, Sarah was an eighty-year-old lady, crippled by gout, and incapable of ascending the stairs. Very little attention is therefore accorded to the upper storey in the inventory since it was no longer in regular use.[199] Furthermore, this inventory was taken at the same time as one of Blenheim Palace, with the purpose of distinguishing items which belonged to the dukedom (over which Sarah had a life interest only) from those personally owned by the Duchess which she could bequeath at her own discretion.[200] What makes both

[197] HRO Panshanger MSS, F228, p.105: SM to Lady Cowper, 23 October 1711. The lower storey of the house was not yet completed: 'below there is nothing but stone-cutters wch is of all the Trades the most dirty & disagreeable'.

[198] The principal level of the building is here referred to as 'the ground floor' although it was located over a half-basement.

[199] BL Add MS 61473, f.14: Inventory of Blenheim Palace and Marlborough House, 1740. 'as the Attick Story was not used after his [the Duke's] death and the furniture Worn out it was put to Ordinary Uses.' This inventory is reproduced in T. Murdoch, ed., *Noble Households: Eighteenth-Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[200] In her final will, Sarah granted her favourite grandson, John Spencer, a life interest in Marlborough House together with outright ownership of her personal possessions there. She was consequently eager to protect John's inheritance from his elder brother, Charles, who had become the 3rd Duke of Marlborough in 1733.

inventories unusual, as well as highly valuable to scholars, is the inclusion of Sarah's own comments relating to various items in each house. In her analysis of the Blenheim document, Judith Lewis noted that Sarah was able to 'mentally dismember items of furniture' revealing her possessiveness over objects.[201] This is similarly evident in the Marlborough House inventory. For example, after listing the 'light walnut tree chairs with Gilt Leather' in the Salon, Sarah adds: 'the leather is the Dss of Marlborough's but no matter to separate it.'[202]

To date the only attempt to identify the function of the individual rooms shown in Wren's floor plan has been that of Robert Kerr in his 1865 history of the interior plans of English residences (fig.1.21).[203] Although praising the layout of Marlborough House as 'one of the best plans of the period', he goes on to lament that convenience had been subordinated to 'Palladian regularities'. One of the greatest faults identified by Kerr was the long distance between the kitchen wing and the dining room. However, it appears that his situating of the dining room to the west of the main block was erroneous. The room order set out in the inventory of 1740 makes it far more likely that the dining room was located on the eastern side of the main block, and therefore within easy reach of the kitchen. Starting with the entrance hall, the inventory clearly proceeds anti-clockwise around the ground floor of the building, before briefly listing some of the contents contained in the chambers on the upper level. Consequently, the room identified by Kerr as the dining room should have been named as the 'Great Room', whilst the room he describes as the library was actually the original dining room (fig.1.22). By combining the evidence provided by the floor plan

[201] Lewis, 'When a House Is Not a Home', p.347.

[202] BL Add MS 61473, f.12.

[203] R. Kerr, *The Gentleman's House, Or, How to Plan English Residences, from the Parsonage to the Palace…* (London: J. Murray, 1865), pp.422-23.

and inventory, the following discussion attempts to reconstruct the layout and appearance of the ground floor reception rooms.

After entering the building via the 'very noble' stone stairway, the visitor would arrive in the central hallway, which rose the full height of the building, illuminated by three large windows above the entrance.[204] Unlike many later Georgian town houses, in which the vestibule was relatively muted in decoration, the Marlborough House hallway was arguably the most impressive space in the interior.[205] Wren the younger appears to acknowledge this in one of his letters to the Duchess, writing: 'tho the room is a first room, it will be a very good one.'[206] Its ceiling was decorated with a cycle of nine paintings by Orazio Gentileschi, representing an allegory of peace reigning over the arts (fig.1.23). This cycle, commissioned by Queen Henrietta Maria in the mid-1630s, had originally adorned the Great Hall of the Queen's House in Greenwich.[207] It is not known exactly when the canvases were removed from their original setting, but it seems likely that Queen Anne had granted them to the Marlboroughs as a gift earlier in her reign. [208] According to Wren the younger's letter, mentioned above, it had been necessary to cut some of the canvases

[204] Macky, *Journey through England*, p.127.

[205] See Howard, 'You never saw such a scene': 'halls as intermediate spaces between the outside and interior were often left simple and unadorned'.

[206] BL Add MS 61357, f.55: Wren the younger to SM, 23 April 1711.

[207] G. Chettle, 'Appendix 2: Ceiling paintings at Marlborough House', in *Survey of London Monograph 14, the Queen's House, Greenwich* (London, 1937).

[208] John Bold posits that the Gentileschi ceiling paintings may have been taken down and put into temporary storage during the Commonwealth period. However, in 1662, the Great Hall of the Queen's House was 'scaffolded for the installation of pictures', suggesting the works may have been reinstalled at this date. They had certainly been removed by 1708 when the ceiling was mended and painted for Sir William Gifford, the Governor of Greenwich Hospital. J. Bold, *Greenwich: An Architectural History of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Queen's House* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), p.69.

down in size as the ceiling of the saloon at Greenwich had formed a perfect square, whilst the ceiling at Marlborough House was oblong in shape.[209] The prominence of these paintings in the Duchess's hallway would have inevitably invited a comparison with Inigo Jones's celebrated double height saloon. Such an association would have been further reinforced by the full-length portrait of Anne of Denmark, the eponymous patroness of the Queen's House, which hung in this space. Described in the 1740 inventory as 'Queen Ann of Denmark with dogs in a hunting dress', this was almost certainly a copy of the portrait painted by Paul van Somer in 1617, now at Hampton Court Palace (fig.1.24).[210] This portrait alludes to the Queen's love of building through the inclusion of the classical gateway, built by Inigo Jones, before the Tudor palace of Oatlands in the background. The display of this royal portrait in Marlborough House, alongside the Gentileschi paintings, was surely intended to propose a flattering parallel between Sarah and the Stuart queen, both patronesses of architecture.[211]

To decorate the upper walls of the hallway, and the adjoining staircase compartments, Sarah commissioned the French artist, Louis Laguerre, to paint a series of murals describing her husband's victorious battles in the War of the Spanish Succession. Whilst those in the hallway show five scenes from the Battle of Blenheim (1704) (fig.1.25), the walls of the main staircase represent the Battle of Ramillies (1706) and those on the east staircase, the Battle of Malplaquet (1709). It is worth noting that there was a significant time lag between Sarah taking up residence in the house in the autumn of 1711 and the execution of these murals between 1713 and

[209] BL Add MS 61357, f.55: Wren the younger to SM, 23 April 1711.

[210] For each cited work of art listed in the 1740 inventory, I will give all the information provided in the document.

[211] John Bold notes that the design of the Queen's House 'owes more to [Anne of Denmark's] ideas and desires than has been adequately acknowledged.' Bold, *Greenwich*, p.45.

1714. This is related to the political downfall of the Duke himself. On 27 November 1711, just a few weeks after Sarah had moved into Marlborough House, Jonathan Swift had published his latest and most damaging attack yet on the Duke, titled *The Conduct of the Allies and of the Late Ministry in Beginning and Carrying on the Present War*. This was a polemical text representing the entire war as 'a gigantic conspiracy between Marlborough and the Allies to secure profits for themselves at England's expense.'[212] Under ever increasing pressure from Tory ministers, the Queen finally dismissed the Duke from his offices on 31 December 1711. Thereafter, the Marlboroughs' position in London society became increasingly insecure and, by February 1713, they had both left England and gone into a kind of self-imposed exile in the German principalities, remaining there until August 1714.[213] It must therefore have been during the months prior to the Duchess's departure, when her resentment towards the Queen and ministry was arguably at its most intense, that the design of the murals in both the hallway and staircases was planned.

Sarah's decision to glorify the Duke's military heroism in the décor of her town house shows that she took considerable pride in her husband's achievements. She must also have been aware that her own reputation was heavily reliant on that of the Duke.[214] Her correspondence dating from her months of exile proves that she was directly involved in the design and arrangement of these works, even though she was

[212] By the end of January 1712, over 11,000 copies of this text had been sold. Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.187.

[213] The Duke left England in November 1712. Sarah remained for a few months to settle their financial affairs before joining her husband in February 1713.

[214] In discussing Sarah's relationship with Blenheim Palace, Judith Lewis suggests that she felt excluded from an environment dedicated to the military glory of her husband. Her decision to celebrate her husband's victories at Marlborough House could be seen to contradict this. Lewis, 'When a House Is Not a Home', p.363.

unable to supervise Laguerre's progress in person. In one letter to her lawyer and relative, Robert Jennens, she wrote: 'my bargain with Mr La Guere was to give him five hundred pounds for the Hall *as I bespoke it* down 2 the pannells & the two staircases' (my emphasis).[215] On another occasion, she expressed her concern about the visibility of the murals, having just received a report from a visitor to the house ('a person very knowing') that the battle scenes in the hallway were 'not strong enough painted to bee well seen'. Consequently, Sarah wrote to Jennens from Antwerp: 'if this bee rightly judged, as I fear it is, I am sure you will doe what you can 2 have it mended in what is done, as far as it can bee & prevent the same fault upon the stair cases, but they will bee seen much nearer than the Hall.'[216] Sarah's instructions indicate a clear vision of how she wished the murals to be experienced: their impact and visibility was crucial for the desired effect.

Once the mural paintings had been completed, they altered the visitor's experience of the hallway in significant ways. On entering the space, one's attention is drawn to the climactic scene of the Battle of Blenheim on the opposite wall, in which the Duke accepts the surrender of Marshal Tallard (figs 1.25 and 1.26).[217] This episode from the battle is also depicted in the famous *Victories* tapestries commissioned by the Duke for Blenheim Palace. However, in Laguerre's version, the composition works quite differently.[218] Unlike the tapestry, in which the Duke is the focal figure, Laguerre accords the surrendering Marshal Tallard the same prominence as his victor. The dignified confrontation of the two mounted military leaders emphasises the Duke's

[215] BL Add MS 62569, f.119: SM to Robert Jennens, 16 May [1714].

[216] BL Add MS 62569, f.120: SM to Robert Jennens, 7 May OS [1714].

[217] For a full discussion on this scene, see Hamlett, 'Rupture Through Realism', p.202.

[218] The *Victories* tapestries at Blenheim had been commissioned by the Duke for the state rooms there. They were designed by Lambert De Hondt and woven by Jodocus de Vos between 1706 and 1710.

clemency towards his enemy and his openness to concord, a message further reinforced by Gentileschi's allegory of peace on the ceiling above.[219] Moreover, there is an interesting link between Laguerre's depiction of Marshal Tallard's surrender in Marlborough House and the tomb monument which Sarah later commissioned from William Kent and John Michael Rysbrack in 1732 for the chapel at Blenheim Palace.[220] The stone relief on the podium of the monument shows this same scene, and its composition has been copied almost exactly from Laguerre's painting (figs 1.27 and 1.28). Given that Sarah was closely involved in overseeing the design of the Blenheim memorial, this indicates that she was particularly satisfied with Laguerre's representation, presumably asking Kent to copy its composition when designing the frieze.[221]

Flanking the central hallway are the two top-lit staircase halls. Both these spaces bring the spectator into eye-level contact with distressing scenes from the battlefield, suggesting that Sarah's instructions about their visibility, noted above, were taken into account. One of the most prominent scenes from the Battle of Ramillies on the west staircase shows the foreshortened corpse of Colonel Bringfield, moments after being hit by cannon shot whilst helping the Duke of Marlborough to remount his horse (fig.1.29). Far from heroic, Bringfield's body is sprawled across the canvas, flanked by two further corpses to his left and the exposed rump of his horse to the right. Meanwhile, on the east staircase, the Duke and his ally, Prince Eugene, are pictured

[219] Hamlett, 'Rupture through Realism', p.205.

[220] The memorial was designed by Kent but executed by Rysbrack.

[221] For a discussion on this commission, see K. Szpila, 'An Eighteenth-Century Artemisia: Sarah Churchill and the Invention of the Blenheim Memorials', in C. Lawrence, ed. *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors, and Connoisseurs* (Pennsylvania, 1997), pp.189-206. However, Szpila claims that the composition was derived from the *Victories* tapestries at Blenheim and not Laguerre's version as noted here.

commanding their troops on the battlefield at Malplaquet. To their left, two women are shown stripping the clothes from a group of lifeless bodies; to their right, a figure on horseback shoots a tangle of naked prisoners (figs 1.30 and 1.31). Not only was this type of iconography unprecedented in the context of London town houses, it is also unknown in Laguerre's own *oeuvre*.[222] The artist had earlier painted the staircase at the nearby Buckingham House, but the scenes there recounted the classical story of Dido and Aeneas (fig.1.32). The Marlborough House murals, meanwhile, forced the spectator to acknowledge 'all the pains [the Duke had] taken with the hazard of his Life so often'.[223] It thus seems that Sarah's overriding concern in commissioning these works was, as Hamlett notes, 'to keep her husband's sacrifices at the forefront of the minds both of those in power and a wider public', reminding them of their debt to his courageous leadership.[224]

Advancing westwards from the principal staircase hall on the ground floor level, the early eighteenth-century visitor would arrive in a large rectangular chamber, described in the inventory as the 'Great Room'. It appears that this space was used to display some of the finest works in the Duke and Duchess's valuable art collection. Adorning the walls were paintings by Peter Paul Rubens, including 'Lot and his Daughters' and 'A Woman with a Wild Boar', as well as various royal portraits by Anthony van Dyck.[225] Although there were no direct references to the Duke's battles in this space, there was a portrait of his most famous enemy, 'Lewis the fourteenth',

[222] L. Hamlett, *Mural Painting in Britain 1630-1730* (New York: Routledge, 2020), pp.106-136.

[223] SM to Lady Cowper, 23 June 1711, HRO Panshanger MS F228, p.85. For a full discussion on the iconography of these murals, see Hamlett, 'Rupture through Realism', pp.203-04 and L. Hamlett, *Mural Painting in Britain*, pp.115-22.

[224] Hamlett, 'Rupture Through Realism', p.211.

[225] BL Add MS 61473: f.11.

hanging above the chimneypiece. This would have provided a clear visual link with Blenheim Palace, where the marble bust of Louis XIV, looted by the Duke in Tournai, famously adorned the central doorway of the south-facing façade. Meanwhile the furnishings included 'four settees with walnut tree frames', 'ten chairs' and 'three long forms', all covered with red India damask. In dictating the inventory, the Duchess drew particular attention to the mirrors in this room. She describes these as 'an Extream large Glass much bigger than the Ordinary Size and Two lesser'.[226] Her evident pride in the exceptional dimensions of the main mirror further underscores her conflicted attitude towards conspicuous display at Marlborough House. Far from projecting frugality, looking glasses were an ostentatious sign of wealth in this period, often more costly than old master paintings.[227] With its five large windows, together with the mirrors, this room would have benefited from abundant natural light during the day. At night, it was illuminated by 'Two Silverd Sconces that is Chandeleirs', creating a glittering effect when reflected in the mirrors.[228] It is significant that this, the largest state room, overlooked the neighbouring palace of St James's, its splendour placing it on a par with the royal residence. It was, however, hidden from the more public view into the house from the Mall.

The room located to the south of the 'Great Room' is merely described as the 'next room' in the 1740 inventory. It was also decorated with two looking glasses (one of them 'very large'). The paintings in this room were mostly portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough's family, focusing on two sets of kin. One consisted of their two Godolphin grandchildren: the 'Dutchess of Newcastle' (Henrietta, who had

[226] *Ibid*. f.11v.

[227] Howard, 'You never saw such a scene', p.59.

[228] BL Add MS 61473: f.11v.

married the Duke of Newcastle in 1717) and 'Lord Blandford' (William Godolphin, who had died in 1731). The other was made up of their son-in-law, Scroop Egerton, 'Duke of Bridgewater', and his two children, 'Lord Brackely' and 'Lady Jersey' (fig.1.33).[229] It seems that the display of family portraits changed over the course of Sarah's residence here, depending on which of her children and grandchildren were in favour at any time. For example, when, in 1732, Sarah felt betrayed by her eldest Spencer granddaughter, Lady Bateman, she allegedly blackened the face of Anne's portrait at Marlborough House, leaving it 'hanging in its place for all to see.'[230]

This room provided access to two further spaces tucked into the projecting south-east wing overlooking the garden: 'Mrs Ridley's chamber' to the left, and a staircase compartment to the right.[231] Grace Ridley was 'head chambermaid' and one of Sarah's most trusted servants. Her room's proximity to the Duchess's bedchamber suggests that she was required to be near at hand to serve her mistress on account of Sarah's infirmity by that date. Harris has noted that Sarah's servants were arguably 'her greatest source of consolation' during her old age, a rather sad consequence of her acrimonious relationship with her surviving children and grandchildren.[232] In addition to Grace, those who are listed as resident in Marlborough house in 1740 included Chris Loft, her steward; Mr Griffiths, her butler and Mr Lewis, the groom of the Chamber. These servants were accommodated in the 'Upper Servants Rooms' which the Duchess described as being 'properly furnished'. Sarah was capable of great gestures of

[229] *Ibid.* Scroop Egerton was the widower of Sarah's daughter, Elizabeth, who died in 1714. Anne Egerton [Lady Jersey] (1706-65) married first the 3rd Duke of Bedford but, following his death in 1732, she married William Villiers, 3rd Earl of Jersey (fig.1.33).

[230] Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.286.

[231] BL Add MS 61473: f.11v.

[232] Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.338.

generosity to some of her most loyal servants. Grace had served the Duchess for an exceptionally long period of time, having grown up, married and been widowed in the household. As a reward for her service, she received the colossal sum of £16,000 in Sarah's will.[233] Charles Hodges (Sarah's chief steward who had served her for over thirty years) was also greatly valued. Following his death in 1730, the Duchess even arranged for his body to lie in state in the main hall of Marlborough House, after which he was 'interr'd with great Funeral Pomp' at her own expense.[234]

The three main rooms overlooking the garden of Marlborough House are described in 1740 as 'my Lady Dutchess's Bed Chamber', 'the Salon' and the 'Room next the Salon'. Sarah had, by this date, confined herself to the lower level of the house due to problems of mobility – her bedchamber was most likely originally located on the upper floor. In addition to the bed with its blue damask hangings, the 'Bed Chamber' was decorated with a suite of tapestries. The Salon, the central room on the garden side, also connected the entrance hall with the garden. It was therefore a prominent space for entertaining, its importance reflected in its display of valuable paintings, including 'Prince Philip by a good hand at length' and 'a very fine Landskip by a Great Master' over the chimney.[235] The next room in this sequence was decorated with 'a sett of Fine Tapestry of the Duke of Marlboroughs Battles', providing another visual echo with the celebrated *Victories* tapestries at Blenheim Palace referred to above. Here was also displayed a full-length portrait of Queen Anne 'in the Coronation dress' by Godfrey Kneller. When seen in combination with the tapestries, this portrait

[233] *True Copy of the Last Will and Testament of her Grace Sarah, Late Duchess Dowager of Marlborough* (London, 1744), p.76.

[234] *Evening Post*, 5-8 September 1730.

[235] BL Add MS 61473: f.12.

served to remind the visitor of the bond which had once existed between Queen Anne and the Marlboroughs.[236]

The room referred to as the 'Drawing Room' was again decorated with looking glasses, one of them 'Extream large', chandeliers and 'two high Japanned Screens'. Religious paintings and more family portraits adorned the walls. The most significant of these was the 'large Picture of the Duke & Dutchess of Marlbro & five Children': evidently the group portrait painted around 1693 by John Closterman, now located at Blenheim Palace (fig.1.34). One of the most notable aspects of this work is the central placing of the Duchess, a position normally accorded to the patriarch of the family. As suggested by Jeri Bapasola, the portrait was originally commissioned to hang in Sarah's parental home, Holywell House in St Albans, which may help to account for its 'matricentric arrangement'.[237] However, even though it was not commissioned specifically for Marlborough House, its location here seems highly appropriate, Sarah's prominence in the composition reflecting her role as the building's principal owner. Further family portraits were displayed over the three main doorways in the drawing room, depicting Lady Sunderland (Sarah's daughter, Anne, who had married Charles Spencer, 3rd Earl of Sunderland in 1700), Francis, Earl of Godolphin (Sarah's son-in-law), and Mrs Dunch. The last was the Duke's niece, Elizabeth (née Godfrey), a

[236] For example, in 1703, the Queen had written to Sarah: 'if ever you [Sarah and her husband] should forsake me I would have nothing more to do with the world but make another abdication; for what is a crown when the support of it is gone?' Quoted in D. Green, *Sarah Duchess of Marlborough* (London, 1967), p.93.

[237] J. Bapasola, *Faces of Fame and Fortune* (Woodstock: Blenheim Estate Office, 2006), pp.16-17. See also K. Retford, *Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006), p.222.

renowned beauty at court, who seems to have been a favourite of Sarah's.[238] There was therefore a significantly large number of family portraits on display in Marlborough House. Whilst ancestors were commonly represented in grand houses of the period, especially in the country seat, the Marlboroughs were founders of a new ducal dynasty with no aristocratic lineage of which to boast. For this reason, most of the family members represented here were living relatives and members of Sarah's extended family.

The final significant reception room was the dining room, another important space for entertaining. The portraits in this room advertised the Duke and Duchess's pan-European royal connections, featuring the King of Prussia (brother-in-law to George I), Charles II, William III and Prince Eugene, the Duke's great military ally. Specific reference is also made in the inventory to the portrait of Sidney, Lord Godolphin, which, Sarah noted 'is the Duchess of Marlborough's'. She thereby staked her claim to the likeness of the man she once described as 'the truest friend to me & all my family that ever was, & the best man that ever lived'.[239] Godolphin had been both a close friend and political ally to the Marlboroughs for more than thirty years and their families had been united through the marriage of Henrietta Churchill to Godolphin's only son, Francis. Such was Sarah's affection for Godolphin that she had nursed him at Holywell House during his final illness in September 1712. Finally, the 'Bachanalian Piece very Fine by Rubens' was well suited to the room's function for the consumption of food and drink.[240]

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[238] BL Add MS 61450, f.224: Elizabeth Dunch to SM, [Sept-Oct 1708]. Elizabeth wrote to the Duchess thanking her for her 'goodness & kindness to Mr Dunch' after Sarah helped him gain 'employment from the Queen'. Elizabeth's town house in Scotland Yard is discussed in chapter 3.

[239] SM to Bishop Burnett, 24 August 1733, quoted in Harris, *General in Winter*, p.1.

[240] BL Add MS 61473: f.13.

As the above evidence indicates, the reception rooms on the principal floor of Marlborough House were furnished and decorated with a view to impressing the visitor, thus proclaiming the high status of Sarah, the Duke and their family. In a final note to the 1740 inventory, Sarah wrote: 'The Reason the Account of the Goods at Marlborough House is not more is because the best pictures were sent to Blenheim and all the fine Hangings except one suit', thus indicating that the interiors had originally been even more lavishly decorated.[241] The expense of the house's contents had certainly been singled out by various contemporary commentators who had visited the property during the 1720s. For example, Baron de Pollnitz described the house as 'very richly furnished and adorned with admirable paintings'.[242] It thus appears that Sarah was willing to invest large sums on valuable paintings and costly items of furniture when the house was first completed, despite her protestations of frugality. As the following section will show, many of these spaces provided the setting for important entertainments and ceremonies during the Duchess's lifetime.

Part 4: Inhabiting Marlborough House

Sarah's period of residence at Marlborough House lasted nearly three decades, through the reigns of three monarchs: Queen Anne who died in 1714; George I (1714-27); and George II (1727-60). When she first took up residence in the house, she was a married woman. However, her situation altered radically when her husband fell ill in 1716. From then until his death in 1722, Sarah acted as the Duke's intermediary with the

[241] BL Add MS 61473, f.14.

[242] De Pollnitz, *Memoirs,* vol. 2, p.437; See also Anon. *A Guide to London or Directions to Strangers* (London, 1726), p.7.

outside world, the couple typically spending the winter months in London.[243] Once she became a widow, the house continued to provide a convenient base from which to influence the lives and behaviour of her many grandchildren. Consequently, over the course of this thirty-year period, Marlborough House performed a range of functions for Sarah, both private and public. This final section of the chapter will revisit the whole period of Sarah's residence in Marlborough House, starting in the late autumn of 1711, to consider both how the property operated as an alternative power base to the monarch's residence and as an important hub for the Duchess, performing her roles as a matriarch and grandmother.

Queen Anne's Reign

As noted, it seems highly likely that Sarah originally intended Marlborough House to serve as a complementary venue to St James's Palace, helping her to sustain her public role as a political influencer at the royal court. This had certainly been Maynwaring's optimistic vision. Writing in 1709, he had pointed out that Sarah had much to gain from the minor inconvenience of continuing in her position as a courtier: 'It will make you enjoy what you have with comfort, live delightfully in your new house, & be greater than you cou'd ever have been [as a favourite]'.[244] However, as noted above, Sarah's relationship with the Queen continued to deteriorate until she was forced to resign from all her royal offices in January 1711. Consequently, when she moved into the house in October of that year, she had all but abandoned any hope of returning to royal favour.

[243] Harris, *Passion for Government*, pp.216-17.

[244] BL Add MS 61460, f.6: Maynwaring to Duchess, [August 1709].

Despite this, it seems that Sarah did use Marlborough House as a setting for political entertaining. According to the contemporary account of Thomas Lediard, the Duchess frequently entertained at both Holywell House and Marlborough House during this period 'with an uncommon Splendour, Liberality and Magnificence'.[245] Meanwhile, Anne, Countess of Strafford, claimed that Sarah planned to 'outdo' the entertainments of her great rival, Adelhida, the Duchess of Shrewsbury (1660-1726).[246] Adelhida was the leading political hostess of the Tory party and a near neighbour of the Marlboroughs, since her London residence was Warwick House, a seventeenth-century mansion, located at the eastern end of Pall Mall (fig.1.35). Given the proximity of their residences, the two women would undoubtedly have been aware of comings and goings at one another's properties.[247] As noted by Hannah Greig, such jostling between hostesses, was a recognised form of political rivalry.[248] However, Sarah's attempts to convince society of her continued power and influence through such extravagant entertaining were to be short lived. Following the Duke's dismissal from his offices on 31 December 1711, the couple's relationship with the court deteriorated still further.

The situation came to a head the following month when Prince Eugene of Savoy came to London on a diplomatic visit. Eugene, the Duke's great military ally, had been sent by Charles VI, the Holy Roman Emperor, intent on persuading the British government to reconsider their proposed peace terms with the French.[249]

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[245] T. Lediard, *Life of John, Duke of Marlborough*, 2 vols (London: 1743), vol. 2, p.283. Thomas Lediard (1685-1743) was a writer and surveyor who had been attached to the Duke of Marlborough's staff.

[246] Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p.208: Lady Strafford to Thomas Wentworth, 15 November 1711.

[247] *SoL*, vols 29-30, pp.427-30.

[248] Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.134.

[249] *Evening Post*, 5-8 January 1712.

However, when the Marlboroughs planned to give a ball at Marlborough House in the Prince's honour, they faced accusations from the Queen's ministers that they were 'vying with the court', obliging them to cancel the event.[250] Sarah's account of the same incident suggests that there were further, still more serious accusations:

> The Prince dines here to day, & plays in the Evening, but our dancing is put off upon the most foolish as well as the most wicked invention that our Ministers have yet been guilty of that it was a Plot cover'd with the name of a Ball, & that the Queen was not safe at St James's & tis certain that there were orders given to increase the Guards & to have them ready horsed.[251]

As this episode shows, by early 1712, Sarah's grand entertainments at Marlborough House were perceived by the Queen and her Tory ministers to be a genuine threat, not only to royal authority but also to the monarch's personal safety. The Queen's hostility to the Marlboroughs meant that they no longer held the political leverage they had previously enjoyed, whilst the Duchess claimed to feel decidedly unwelcome in the neighbourhood of St James's.[252] By February 1713, they had both left England for the German principalities, remaining there until August 1714. During this period, Marlborough House remained unoccupied, save for the activities of Louis Laguerre in painting the hallway and staircase compartments.

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[250] Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p.248: Peter Wentworth to Lord Strafford, 12 January 1712.

[251] HRO Panshanger MS F228, SM to Lady Cowper, pp.78-79.

[252] Writing to Lady Cowper shortly before her departure for the continent, she remarked: 'there is a desire both in my Dame Dobson & Nab to have me out of their Neighbourhood.' HRO Panshanger MS F228, SM to Lady Cowper, n.d. [1713], p.140. 'Dame Dobson and Nab' were her names for Queen Anne and Abigail.

The Hanoverian Period:

The Marlboroughs returned to England on 1 August 1714, only one day before the death of Queen Anne. Whilst Sarah claimed that their return was motivated by family concerns, she had clearly been informed of the Queen's rapidly declining state of health during the preceding months. It seems likely that the Marlboroughs wished to reassert their position as powerful members of the aristocracy ahead of the new King's arrival in the capital. On their entry into London on 4 August, the Duke and Duchess were accompanied by an impressive entourage of 'two hundred Gentleman and others on horseback', and by their 'noble Relations and others of the Nobility and Gentry in their coaches'.[253] Marlborough House was the point of destination for their triumphant return. On entering the property, they would have set eyes on Laguerre's completed murals for the first time. The following morning, the house provided the stage for various visits from foreign ministers and 'great numbers of the nobility, gentry and officers of the army', who came to pay their respects to the Duke.[254] The new King arrived in England on 18 September 1714 and headed straight for the capital. In Abraham Allard's print, showing George I's arrival at St James's, Marlborough House is clearly visible in the top right-hand corner, a reminder of the house's proximity to the royal palace (fig.1.36).

The new reign began relatively auspiciously for the Marlboroughs, with the Duke restored to his position as Captain-General of the Land Forces on 4 September 1714. However, in 1716, their fortune took a turn for the worse. In April, their much-

[253] Lediard, *Life of John, Duke of Marlborough*, vol. 2, p.453. According to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu 'The Duke was returned in a sort of triumph, with the apparent merit of having suffered for his fidelity to the succession', Wharncliffe, *Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 2 vols (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1893), vol.1, p.123.

[254] Lediard, *Life of John, Duke of Marlborough*, vol.2, p.453.

loved daughter, Anne Spencer, Lady Sunderland, died. As a result, the Duke and Duchess assumed responsibility for their Spencer grandchildren, taking the youngest, Diana, to live with them. The same month, the Duke himself suffered a major stroke whilst staying at Holywell House. Although the couple spent the winter of 1716-17 in London, the Duke was 'seen little outside Marlborough House', his wife assuming control over his affairs.[255] When the couple's newly widowed son-in-law, Charles Spencer, Duke of Sunderland, became the chief minister in 1717, many in the circle of Lord Oxford (Robert Harley) were led to believe that Sarah continued to wield power over the ministry. However, she soon became disenchanted with Sunderland when he married Judith Titchborne, a woman of neither rank nor fortune, only a year after her daughter's death. It appears that the loss of her daughter and the declining health of her husband led Sarah to focus increasingly on the well-being of her family rather than engaging in factional party politics. During this period her attention was also directed towards the completion of Blenheim Palace. Having dismissed Vanbrugh in 1716, she had effectively taken over the project herself with the assistance of her cabinet maker, James Moore.[256]

The function of Marlborough House during these later decades appears to have been twofold. It provided both short- and long-term accommodation for several of Sarah's grandchildren, and it offered a grand setting for ceremonial events including family weddings and the lying-in-state of the Duke in 1722. Harriet Godolphin, the eldest of Sarah's granddaughters, had taken up residence in Marlborough House in 1715 on the understanding that her grandmother would find a suitable match for her

[255] Harris, *Passion for Government*, p.216.

[256] *Ibid.*, p.221.

and provide her dowry.[257] As has been noted by Stewart, such residence in London offered a wider range of potential alliances than life in the country, and facilitated appropriate introductions.[258] The Duchess's specific target was Thomas Pelham-Holles, the Duke of Newcastle. After protracted negotiations over the size of the dowry, Harriet was married to Newcastle at Marlborough House on 2 April 1717, after which there was 'a great entertainment & a great Number of Relations on both sides.'[259] The house thus acted as both a base from which to enter London society, and as a grand setting for the performance of the wedding ceremony itself. Some of the master paintings in the Great Room, notably 'The Marriage at Canaan' would have provided a particularly appropriate backdrop for the celebrations of these nuptials.[260] Moreover, the prominent position of Marlborough House helped to ensure a high degree of visibility for this judicious alliance between a granddaughter of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough and the Duke of Newcastle, a rising star of the Whig party. As noted above, Harriet's own portrait as a married woman was later to be displayed prominently in the house, drawing attention to the family's aristocratic connections.[261]

Immediately after the Duke's death at Windsor Lodge on 16 June 1722, the Duchess set about making elaborate preparations for his funeral. Marlborough House was chosen as the setting for his lying-in-state, a highly theatrical ritual lasting several days prior to the funeral ceremony itself. This necessitated the transformation of the house's reception rooms on the principal floor into spaces of mourning to receive the

[257] *Ibid.,* p.208.

[258] Stewart, *Town House in Georgian London,* p.33.

[259] BL Add MS 61451: f.26: Account of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.

[260] BL Add MS 61473: f.11. The name of the artist is not given.

[261] Three years later, another granddaughter, Anne Spencer, was married at Marlborough House to the wealthy William Bateman. *Daily Post,* 12 March 1720.

members of the nobility. Although George I had offered to pay for the funeral, as a mark of his high opinion of the Duke's 'extraordinary merit', Sarah insisted on covering the costs herself, so that she could ensure that everything was prepared 'with the greatest State and Magnificence'.[262] As noted by Clare Gittings, such heraldic funerals were public occasions, serving to reinforce aristocratic power.[263] For the Duchess, this opportunity for elaborate display was both a means of publicly expressing her devotion to her husband's memory, and a way of asserting the rank and importance of the Marlborough dynasty. According to a detailed account given in the *Daily Journal*, five of the rooms at Marlborough House were devoted to the ritual. The first three were described as follows:

> The first room was hung with bayes [baize]; the 2^{d} with cloth where was a chair of State at the Upper End, the 3^{d} was hung with Velvet floored with Bayes, having at the Upper End an Ascent of 3 steps where stood a Bed of State of Black Velvet properly adorn'd with Black Plumes at the head of the Tester…[264]

Based on this evidence, I would suggest that the most likely route taken through the house was a circuit, as shown in figure 1.37. The first room would thus refer to the Great Hall, and the second to the Salon with the chair of state. From there, the visitor would have turned right into the third room (later the Duchess's bedchamber). Here, the coffin was placed on the bed of state, over which was arranged a complete suit of

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[262] Lediard, *John, Duke of Marlborough*, vol. 2, p.471. Wryly commenting on Sarah's extravagance, the wounded Vanbrugh wrote: 'Here is a pompous funeral preparing, but curb'd & crippl'd by her Grace, who will govern it by her fancys […] I don't know whether it won't cost her Ten Thousand pounds.' Quoted in L. Whistler, *Vanbrugh: Architect & Dramatist, 1664-1726* (New York, 1939), p.269.

[263] C. Gittings, , *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1984), p.174. See also N. Mihailovic 'The Dead in English Urban Society, 1689-1840' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 2011).

[264] *Daily Journal*, 13 August 1722.

gilt armour. In addition to these spaces, the account goes on to describe 'two other large rooms' which were 'hung with cloth and adorned in the like manner for the Reception of the Nobility and other guests who were invited to the funeral'. Continuing with the proposed route, these would have been the two reception rooms on the west side of the house, including the Great Room. Finally, the visitor would have proceeded back towards the entrance hall via the principal west staircase where they would have experienced a close encounter with Laguerre's representation of the Duke at the Battle of Ramillies; a fitting finale to the funerary tour.

The Duke's will left his widow an exceptionally wealthy woman. Not only did she benefit from a jointure of £20,000 a year, but she was also granted a life interest in both Blenheim Palace and Marlborough House.[265] As noted by Ingrid Tague, Sarah's wealth enabled her to exert an exceptional amount of influence over her grandchildren, even after they reached adulthood, to the extent that her family could almost be termed 'matriarchal'.[266] In 1731, Sarah presided over the wedding of Diana Spencer to John Russell, younger brother of the Duke of Bedford, at Marlborough House. Based on the detailed newspaper account, it seems that Sarah put on a particularly lavish display for the wedding of this favourite grandchild:

> the Ceremony was performed by the Lord Bishop of Sarum; after which a magnificent Supper was serv'd up for the Noble Company, there were on the

[265] It was not in the Duke's power to dispose of Marlborough House, since it was granted as a leasehold from the Crown 'in the name of [his] Wife or her Trustees'. However, he recommended that house should go with the dukedom 'or to the Use of [his] children and grandchildren' after Sarah's decease. *True and Authentick Copies of the Last Wills and Testaments of John, Duke of Marlborough …[etc.]* (London, 1753), pp.26-27.

[266] Tague, 'Aristocratic Women & ideas of family', p.203.

> Side-board two Ewers, each weighing 25 lb Troy Weight, four large Cups and two Porringers, all of Massy Gold.[267]

The attention drawn here to the precious metals on display during the 'magnificent Supper' suggests that the wedding reception served to highlight the wealth and rank of the bride's family. The exceptionally valuable collection of plate at Marlborough House is underscored by a surviving inventory which gives its overall value as £5,755 11*s* 3*d*.[268] However, such lavish expenditure again exposes the contradiction at the very core of Sarah's repeated insistence on plainness and frugality.

Diana and Harriet were not the only grandchildren to take up temporary residence in Marlborough House. In May 1729, the twenty-one-year-old John Spencer came to live there, after returning from the Grand Tour. To provide him with a degree of independence, Sarah granted him use of the wing located to the west of the main courtyard, 'next the French chapel'. She also arranged for the 'great wall in the Friery' to be taken down, providing him with convenient access to his lodgings.[269] However, Sarah's generosity was most likely motivated by a desire to keep a close eye on his activities. When John fell from his grandmother's grace by resuming contact with his elder sister, Lady Bateman (she whose portrait at Marlborough House was to be blackened in 1732), Sarah ordered him to leave these apartments.[270] The unhappily married Anne Russell, 3rd Duchess of Bedford, also took up residence with her

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[267] *Grub Street Journal*, 14 October 1731.

[268] BL Althorp Papers MS 78026, An Inventory of the Plate of the Honble John Spencer Esquire taken at Marlborough House Nov 20th 1746.

[269] *London Evening Post*, 20-22 May 1729.

[270] John was not out of favour for long. In 1737, Sarah arranged for him to rent Lady Boscawen's house in Whitehall but found the accommodation unsatisfactory (see chapter 3). The following year she bought him a house in Grosvenor Street. *SoL*, vol.40, pp.35-44.

grandmother in London when her dissolute husband travelled to Lisbon in the autumn of 1732.[271] According to Sarah's account, they lived together 'like sisters' until the death of the Duke of Bedford in December. With the assistance of her grandmother, Anne then 'took a house in Pall Mall' which provided the setting for her remarriage to William Villiers, 3rd Earl of Jersey, in June 1733.[272] Finally, a few years later in 1739, Sarah arranged for an apartment to be fitted out at Marlborough House for another widowed granddaughter, Isabella, Duchess of Manchester.[273]

During her final years, Sarah paid considerable attention to the contents of her will. It had always been her intention that Marlborough House should go with the title, in accordance with her husband's wishes.[274] However, she determined not to bequeath this treasured property to her eldest surviving grandson, Charles Spencer, who had become 3rd Duke of Marlborough in 1733. Charles had irredeemably offended his grandmother by marrying Elizabeth Trevor, granddaughter of a former enemy of the 1st Duke, in 1732. [275] Moreover, Sarah feared that Charles would sell or mortgage Marlborough House if it ever came into his power. Her final will thus stipulated that the house should go to every heir except the present Duke.[276] For the immediate future, she granted Charles's younger brother, John, a life interest in the property together with outright possession of all her personal possessions there, indicating that she had

[271] Both Anne and her sister Diana became successive Duchesses of Bedford. Anne was married to Wriothesley Russell, 3rd Duke of Bedford. Following his death in 1732, his brother, John Russell, became the 4th Duke.

[272] BL Add MS 61451, f.133; *Daily Courant,* 30 June 1733.

[273] *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 26 October 1739.

[274] Harris, *Passion for Government,* p.346.

[275] *Ibid.*, p.284. Elizabeth's grandfather, Thomas, Baron Trevor, was one of twelve Tory peers created by Queen Anne in 1711 to guarantee the passage of the peace of Utrecht through the House of Lords.

[276] Harris, *Passion for Government,* p.346.

forgiven him for his former misdemeanour. However, John was only to outlive his grandmother by two years, after which the house apparently stood empty until the 4th Duke could inherit it in 1758.[277]

Conclusion

This examination of Sarah's role in the design and construction of Marlborough House has presented an unusual example of a married woman acting as the sole patron of a London town house in the eighteenth century. Typically, elite women had to wait until they were wealthy widows before performing such a role. Whilst it is clear that Sarah exerted an exceptional level of control over the commission, it would be wrong to accept her presentation of Marlborough House as simple and convenient, in contrast to the excesses of Blenheim Palace. To fully understand the design and appearance of Marlborough House, we must take into account the house's prominent location in the grounds of the royal palace and its relationship with the neighbouring properties. Like other palatial town houses in the West End, such as Buckingham House or Burlington House, Marlborough House displayed the elevated status of its owners in a highly visible setting. Moreover, it has been argued here that the position of Marlborough House responded to the aesthetic of St James's Palace, thereby linking its owner with royal status. Such connections were further reinforced in aspects of the interior, most notably the double height entrance hall adorned with the Gentileschi ceiling paintings from the Queen's House in Greenwich. One of the most surprising aspects of the decorative scheme was the shocking realism of Laguerre's murals adorning the hallway and staircases. However, these powerful scenes shed a revealing light on

[277] *Ibid.,* p.349.

Sarah's personal and political loyalties. Despite her independent spirit, she was exceedingly proud of her husband's military achievements on behalf of his country. Meanwhile, the paintings and portraits on display drew attention to the illustrious aristocratic connections of the new ducal family.

This case study has also highlighted the mutability of the town house by considering the various usages of Marlborough House over the three decades of Sarah's occupancy. Most obviously, the lavishly furnished reception rooms provided an impressive setting for social and political entertaining. When occasion demanded, they could be adapted to stage ceremonial events such as weddings and funerary rituals. However, such spaces could also serve more domestic functions. During Sarah's old age, some of these rooms were converted into bedrooms for Sarah and her maid as her infirmity prevented her from climbing the stairs. Finally, we have seen how Marlborough House accommodated an ever-changing household. Over a twenty-five-year period, it provided a temporary home to at least five of Sarah's grandchildren, allowing her to maintain considerable influence over their lives.

Chapter 2

The London Town House of Mary Howard, 8th Duchess of Norfolk

On 8 October, 1754, a report appeared in the *Whitehall Evening Post*: 'Yesterday the Corpse of the Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk lay in State at her house in Arlington Street, St. James's, where it will continue for three days'.[278] The sixty-two-year old Duchess had died several days previously in the spa town of Tunbridge Wells, but her 'late dwelling house in Arlington Street' provided the setting for her final appearance.[279] Laid out in a room illuminated by candles, her body was displayed against a backdrop of black mourning cloth mounted on scaffolding which transformed the house's elegant interior into a space of reverential solemnity.[280] At the end of this three-day ritual, the corpse was placed in a crimson velvet coffin and transferred into 'a hearse drawn by six horses adorned with Escutcheons of all the Achievements of the Noble Family of Howard', waiting in the private forecourt before the main entrance to the house. The hearse then proceeded through the arched gateway into the street as it set off on its journey to Lancashire where the Duchess was to be buried alongside her ancestors in the Shireburne family chapel near Stonyhurst (fig.2.1).[281]

Although taken from the final episode in the Duchess's history, this scene encapsulates a major theme at the heart of this thesis; the town house's role in

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[278] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 5-8 October 1754.

[279] *Ibid.*, 24-26 September 1754.

[280] LRO DDSt, Box 94, f.6: A Computation of Her Grace's Funeral: refers to payments for '8 nights taking out the Corpse, hanging a Room, wax Lights and sitting up with the corpse: £10' The exact room chosen for the ceremony is not specified; See also R.Houlbrooke, 'The age of decency: 1660-1760' in C. Gittings and P. C. Jupp, eds, *Death in England: An Illustrated History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

[281] *London Evening Post*, 12-15 October 1754; Mihailovic 'The Dead in English Urban Society', pp.101-07.

providing a stage for the self-presentation of its owner. 16 Arlington Street was built between 1734 and 1736 under the direction of James Gibbs (1682-1754) for Mary Howard (née Shireburne), the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk (1692-1754) (fig.2.2). As the only surviving child of the wealthy Catholic landowner, Sir Nicholas Shireburne (1658-1717) and Catherine (née Charleton) (d.1728), Mary was an heiress in her own right. At sixteen, her father had arranged for her to marry Thomas Howard, 8th Duke of Norfolk (1683-1732), a Catholic and one of the most high-ranking noblemen in the country. During their married life, the couple had mostly divided their time between the Howard seat at Worksop in Nottinghamshire and their residence in London which, from 1722 onwards, was located on the east side of St James's Square. They thus enjoyed considerable wealth and a lavish lifestyle. However, they had no children and it seems that they did not enjoy a harmonious relationship. In March 1730, they agreed to a formal separation, obliging Mary to move out of the house in St. James's Square into rented accommodation. Although the Duke laid claim to the rents and profits from his estranged wife's estates during 'their joint lives', this situation came to an abrupt end when he died, not long afterwards in December 1732.[282] Thereafter, the income from the Shireburne estates was paid directly to the widowed Duchess, placing her in a position of financial independence.[283] Consequently, for Mary, widowhood represented a new phase of autonomy in her life, and she lost little time in adapting to

[282] Mary sought legal advice when attempting to retain control of the Shireburne estates. See LRO DDSt, Box 98, f.26: 'Opinion on Norfolk Marriage Settlement, 20 December 1729': 'Lady Dutchess has […] received ye rents & profits to her own use for these 2 years last past ever since ye death of her mother Lady Catherine Shireburne: His Grace now insists on ye rents & profits of ye estate during yr joint lives.'

[283] J. Callow, 'Howard [nee Shireburne], Mary duchess of Norfolk', *ODNB* (2007), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/73837. The estate earned the Duchess a rental income of about £1800, yielding £1200 after expenses.

her changed situation. Fourteen months after her husband's death, she purchased a 'piece or parcel of ground and messuage or tenement' in Arlington Street for £2000 from Sir Thomas Gage of Hengrave, with the intention of establishing her new principal residence in the heart of London's fashionable West End.[284]

Located on the west side of Arlington Street, Mary's new house occupied one of the most sought-after sites in the capital, benefiting from exceptional views over Green Park. In 1720, John Strype had described the street as 'a very good Place, […] especially the West Side which affords larger houses, having Gardens behind, as far as the Park Wall.' He had further claimed that 'the Enjoyment of so good a Prospect and free Air' made the area particularly appealing to 'Persons of Quality'.[285] This praise was echoed in 1734 when James Ralph described the locale as 'one of the most beautiful situations in Europe, for health, convenience and beauty [since] the front of the street is in the midst of the hurry and splendour of the town; and the back is in the quiet simplicity of the country.'[286] Arlington Street had been laid out in 1682 by Henry Bennet, first Earl of Arlington (1618-85), on a strip of land which had previously formed part of Green Park.[287] Its seventeenth-century houses had been uniform in size and style but, during the 1730s, many were rebuilt according to a variety of designs. Ralph lamented these developments, claiming that the resulting lack of uniformity was detrimental to the overall character of the neighbourhood: 'Tis not long since […] that the whole row was harmonious and uniform, tho' not exactly in taste; but now, under

[284] LRO DDSt, Box 120, f.9: Release from Sir Thomas Gage Baronet to her Grace Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk, 6 February 1733 [1734 *NS*].

[285] J. Strype, *Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* (London, 1720).

[286] Ralph, *A Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, Statues and Ornaments in and about London and Westminster...[etc.]* (London: 1734), p.33.

[287] Bradley and Pevsner, *London 6, Westminster*, p.602.

the notion of improvement, is utterly spoilt and ruin'd, and for the sake of the prospect behind, the view before is disjointed and broke to pieces.'[288] The shift towards individual design is evident when comparing the neatly aligned plots in Richard Blome's 1685 plan of the street with the varied plot shapes described in Richard Horwood's map of 1792-99 (figs 2.3 and 2.4). If Ralph's remarks ever came to Mary's attention, she did not heed them. Having acquired her plot in February 1734, she arranged for the existing seventeenth-century building to be demolished and replaced by a new, bespoke four-storeyed house set back from the street and preceded by a forecourt and gatehouse. She was actively involved with the commission from the outset. In a surviving document, dated 9 May 1734, signed by both Gibbs and the Duchess, she pledged to give the architect £300 for 'his said plans & for surveying ye said buildings till they shall be completed'. Mary clearly stated that the new building was to be erected 'by my order according to plans designed by him, & approv'd on by me'.[289]

Mary spared no expense on the building's interior and employed a team of leading craftsmen to decorate a series of elegant reception rooms over the principal two storeys, connected by a magnificent top-lit staircase. The house was to remain largely unaltered into the twentieth century, described by an occupant in that period as 'one of the most unspoilt eighteenth-century houses in London'.[290] However, in 1934 it was acquired by the Royal Overseas League and plans were quickly put in place to repurpose the building and merge its fabric with the adjoining property to the south (fig.2.5). This somewhat insensitive conversion resulted in the demolition of almost a

[288] Ralph, *Critical Review*, p.33.

[289] LRO DDSt Box 120, f.1.

[290] D. Cooper, *The Rainbow Comes and Goes* (London: Penguin, 1961), p.19. Lady Diana Cooper (1892-1986) was the daughter of the 8th Duke of Rutland and lived in the house as a child.

third of the original house and the construction of a large new block across the former courtyard, connecting the main house with the gatehouse in one continuous structure. Two photographs, taken *c*.1935, show the partial demolition of the building in preparation for the construction of the new block (figs 2.6 and 2.7). The drastic remodelling of the house is likely to have contributed to the notable lack of scholarly interest in 16 Arlington Street. Terry Friedman included a brief overview of the building in his 1984 monograph on Gibbs, but his principal concern was to situate it in the context of the architect's *oeuvre*. He thus paid little attention to the building's patron.[291] More recently, Rosemary Baird has provided evidence of Mary's involvement in the design and construction of the house, but chose not to make it the focus of an extended study.[292]

In this chapter, I employ a similar methodology to the previous one. Part 1 takes as its starting point the complex personal history of the Duchess of Norfolk, highlighting various important themes relevant to her role as the patron and owner of 16 Arlington Street. Part 2 focuses on the house itself, drawing on surviving textual and visual material to reconfigure the original appearance of the building, both in terms of its spatial layout and interior decoration prior to the twentieth-century alterations. It then examines new evidence relating to the craftsmen involved in the commission and explores the possibility that various aspects of the interior décor were intended to express Mary's Jacobite sympathies. Finally, Part 3 considers how the house was used by the Duchess after she took up residence there in 1736.

[291] Friedman, *James Gibbs*, pp.208-10.

[292] Baird, *Mistress of the House*, pp.50-51.

Part 1: Mary Howard (née Shireburne), the 8th Duchess of Norfolk

Four distinct themes emerge from Mary's life history which will inform our understanding of her role as the patron and occupant of 16 Arlington Street. These are: the conspicuous expenditure of her father and husband; the Duchess's long-standing affiliation with Jacobitism; her prominent role in London society during her marriage; and, finally, the scandal caused by her marital difficulties. This section explores and unpacks these biographical points, which will help to illuminate the subsequent detailed analysis of the house.

From an early age Mary had learnt to associate high social rank with ostentatious expenditure. When she was three years old, her father had inherited the Shireburne estates and had immediately engaged in an extravagant building project to improve and extend the family seat at Stonyhurst Hall, near Clitheroe (fig.2.8). This had included the addition of cupolas to the manor's towers topped by lead eagles imported from Antwerp, whilst the gardens had been formally laid out in the French taste, echoing Versailles.[293] When Mary married the 8th Duke of Norfolk in May 1709, Sir Nicholas spent £350 on his daughter's wedding clothes and over £128 on an extravagant wedding banquet.[294] He also presented her with a magnificent thirty-four-piece toilet set crafted by the renowned London silversmith, Benjamin Pyne, for the enormous sum of £668, 19*s* 10*d* (fig.2.9).[295]

[293] Anon., 'Stonyhurst College I Lancs: A Home of the Society of Jesus', *Country Life*, 28:719 (15 October 1910), pp.534-42.

[294] LRO DDSt Box 94, f.1: Bill for the wedding meals of Mary Shireburn at her marriage to the Duke of Norfolk, 26 May 1709.

[295] Anon, 'Stonyhurst College II Lancashire: A Home of the Society of Jesus', *Country Life*, 28:720 (22 October 1910), p.574. According to this article, the wedding banquet was held at Sir Nicholas's house in

Mary's new husband was likewise known for his extravagant lifestyle. Commenting on the suitability of the match, one Baron Robert Price stated; 'the duke lives great both in table and equipage'.[296] Arundel Castle, the ancestral seat of the Dukes of Norfolk, had suffered severe damage in the Civil War, so the Duke had chosen to establish his principal seat at Worksop Manor in Nottinghamshire.[297] Prior to his marriage he had almost doubled the size of the original house, refurbishing the interiors in the baroque style and building a *cour d'honneur* to the front of the building, enclosed by elaborate wrought iron gates and railings, to create a magnificent setting in which to receive his new bride.[298] The young couple also made regular visits to London and, in 1722, the Duke seized the opportunity to purchase the freehold on a house on the south-east corner of St James's Square, arguably the most illustrious residential address in the West End.[299]

It is likely that Mary was first introduced to Gibbs through her husband since, around 1714, the Duke had commissioned the architect to make 'a large design for Arandale [Arundel] Castle, the old House being much decay'd'.[300] The plans were never executed as the Duke 'alter'd his mind and laid out that money upon his House at Worksop Mannor' instead, but he continued to support Gibbs's work.[301] He was

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St James's Square although I have not been able to find a record of him owning a property there at this time.

[296] *Manuscripts of the Duke of Portland*, 4th appendix to the 15th report of the Historical Commission: Baron Robert Price to Robert Harley, 13 September 1706.

[297] The castle was damaged by Parliamentarians during the Civil War.

[298] J.M. Robinson, *Dukes of Norfolk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp.152-53: 'The Duke's architect at this stage is not known, but many of the craftsmen are recorded and were of the first rank; [Jean] Tijou, for instance, supplying the wrought iron railings and gates.'

[299] Bradley and Pevsner, *London 6: Westminster*, p.625: 'in 1721, six dukes and seven earls had houses in the square'.

[300] Soane Museum, *Gibbs MS*, p.90.

[301] *Ibid.*

listed as one of the subscribers to Gibbs's *Book of Architecture*, published in 1728.[302] Furthermore, in 1730, he commissioned the goldsmith, Charles Kandler, to make an ormulu tabernacle to a design by Gibbs.[303]

Following the couple's separation in 1730, it appears that Mary was eager to maintain the wealth and status to which she had become accustomed as wife of the country's Premier Duke.[304] As part of the separation agreement she retained most of her jewellery and plate, including a life interest in the thirty-four-piece gilt toilet set.[305] However, as noted above, she was obliged to move out of the house in St James's Square, and so lacked a permanent London residence.[306] Although Mary did regain control of her family seat at Stonyhurst on her husband's death, she never recovered the house's many costly furnishings which the Duke had transferred to Worksop for his own use.[307] Her lavish expenditure on the interior décor of 16 Arlington Street perhaps provided some compensation for this loss.

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[302] J. Gibbs, *A Book of Architecture: containing designs of buildings and ornaments* (London, 1728), p.xxvi.

[303] Robinson, *Dukes of Norfolk*, p.152.

[304] The antiquity of the title dates back to 1397.

[305] LRO DDSt Box 87, f.12: Box 87, f.12: The Duke of Norfolk's Discharge and Release to the Representatives of the Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk for several Jewels and pieces of Plate, 8 February 1755.

[306] When the Duke died in 1732, this house was inherited by his brother, Edward Howard, the 9th Duke of Norfolk (1686-1777) and his young wife, Mary Howard (née Blount) (1712-73), who rapidly established themselves as the new leaders of the Catholic elite in London society. See C. Haynes, 'Of Her Own Making: The Cultural Practice of Mary, 9th Duchess of Norfolk', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 31: 1-2 (2012), 77-98.

[307] Stonyhurst Archive, *Shireburne Papers*, 1.C. Letter from Wm. Hathornthwaite to Mary, Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk, 26 September 1732. Mary's steward, Hathornthwaite, kept his mistress informed when the items were removed from Stonyhurst: 'there is gone to Worksop the Beds and Furniture of three of ye best rooms here, also most of ye best Tapestry, a great part of ye Linnen, some statues out of ye Garden, and ye great Glas in ye Marble Hall is to go'.

The second important theme which needs elucidating here is Mary's long-standing affiliation with Jacobitism. During her upbringing, she had almost certainly imbibed her father's unassailable belief in the superior claim of the Stuart dynasty over the Hanoverians to the British throne. Aged five, she had been sent to the Stuart court in St Germain to be touched for the King's evil; a very public manifestation of Sir Nicholas's profound belief in the quasi-divine powers of the deposed Stuart monarch.[308] Closer to home, Sir Nicholas expressed his religious and political allegiance by adorning the interiors of Stonyhurst with portraits of Popes and exiled Stuarts. His unwavering Jacobite loyalty persisted after the death of James II in 1701, and he narrowly escaped prosecution in 1710 when he was accused of 'collecting revenues and soliciting land for the Old Pretender's cause'.[309] Finally, Mary and her family were connected to the Stuart court through their support and patronage of the Society of Jesus, a scholarly religious congregation of the Catholic church which had been founded by Ignatius of Loyola in the sixteenth century. Between 1725 and 1734, Mary employed Father Thomas Lawson, a Jesuit Priest, as her personal chaplain. Significantly, Lawson had formerly served as confessor to James Edward Stuart, suggesting a connection between the Duchess and the Stuart pretender.[310] Mary also owned several books relating to Jesuit doctrine.[311]

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[308] Callow, 'Howard [née Shireburne], Mary'.

[309] J. Callow, 'The last of the Shireburnes: The art of death and life in recusant Lancashire, 1660-1754', *Recusant History*, 26 (2003), p.604: According to Callow, the existence of a Tory government, and Shireburne's influential friends in the legal profession combined to secure the dropping of charges.

[310] Rev. Dr. Oliver, *Collections towards illustrating the Biography of the Scotch, English, and Irish members of the Society of Jesus* (London, 1845), p.131

[311] LRO DDSt Box 92, f.6: 'A catalogue of books belonging to Her Grace ye Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk': This list includes several pious works written by Jesuit priests and missionaries including 'Ye Daily Exercise of ye devout' a seminal text of the order written by its founder, St Ignatius of Loyola.

During the early part of George I's reign, there is strong circumstantial evidence suggesting that both Mary and her husband were implicated in subversive Jacobite activity. In April 1715, the *Weekly Packet* recorded that 'The Duke of Norfolk, and his Dutchess, accompany'd by his Grace's father-in-law, Sir Nicholas Sherburn, Sir John Web and some other Roman Catholick Gentlemen, set out on Wednesday for France'. [312] Given the date of this visit, coinciding with the lead-up to the Jacobite uprising of August 1715, it seems highly likely that the group were involved in planning the rebellion. The failure of the uprising left the Howards and their fellow Catholics disaffected by defeat and perhaps encouraged the Duke to seek a more pragmatic solution to the conflict. In 1719, he attempted to facilitate an agreement between the Pope, the Hanoverian government and the English Catholic community, but this ended in failure when his fellow Catholic peers rejected the government's proposals. John Callow has alleged that Mary played an active role in this episode, arguing that her influence 'hardened the resolve of many English Catholics to resist calls for the abjuration of the Stuarts and the recognition of the legitimacy of King George I and his heirs.' [313] However, I have found no clear evidence to substantiate this assertion. Whilst there can be little doubt that Mary did strongly sympathise with the Jacobite cause, her influence over her husband and fellow Catholics remains a matter of speculation.

My third theme here is the prominent role which Mary and her husband played in London society throughout their married life. As the holder of the premier dukedom of the country, and the office of Earl Marshal, it was incumbent on the Duke of

[312] *Weekly Packet*, 23 April 1715. Sir John Webb (1667-1724) was a Tory MP and Jacobite sympathiser. His son-in-law of James, 3rd Earl of Derwentwater, was executed as a traitor for his role in the 1715 rebellion.

[313] Callow, 'The Last of the Shireburnes', p.608.

Norfolk, together with his Duchess, to maintain a high profile in the capital, even though his religion prevented him from taking up his seat in the House of Lords. A letter written by Mary in 1719 to her kinswoman, Mrs Howard, makes reference to 'several masquerades' which she attended during the London season, and it appears that she took particular pleasure in the covert character of these entertainments: 'I had ye diversion to find myself often taken for somebody els, and I was sure not to discover my self for some time'. [314] The same letter also shows her close observation of the politics of the royal court. Commenting on the rift between George I and his heir, she writes: 'Our two courts ye Kings and Princes seem very much divided in affection from each other; and since ye Duke of Argylle has changed sides, I see ye Ladyes of ye Princess look very shyely on his dutchess.'[315]

However, despite their prominence on London's social stage, the couple's past involvement with Jacobitism meant that they were viewed with considerable suspicion by the Hanoverian government. This situation came to a head in 1722 when the Duke was arrested on suspicion of his involvement in a plot orchestrated by Francis Atterbury, the Bishop of Rochester, to dethrone the King and restore the Pretender. According to Eamon Duffy this is likely to have been 'a token gesture against Catholics' since there was no clear evidence of his involvement.[316] Initially, the Duke was confined in his own house in St. James's Square where 'none but his Lady

[314] ACM, Howard Letters and Papers 1626-1632, Letter from Mary, Duchess of Norfolk to Mrs Howard, March 6, n.d. but can be dated to 1719 based on the marriages etc. described therein. Mary's delight in masking her identity can be compared with the young Jacobite pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, who appears to have been particularly attracted to disguise. See Riding, *Jacobites*, p.65.

[315] *Ibid*. For a discussion on the division between George I and his heir, see Smith, *Georgian Monarchy*, pp.199-200.

[316] E. Duffy, '"Englishmen in vaine": Roman Catholic allegiance to George I', *Studies in Church History*, 18 (1982), p.362.

suffer'd to be in his Room'. A guard was posted in the house and 'a Serjeant [attended] constantly without the Door.'[317] The Norfolks' newly acquired London residence was thus transformed into a place of confinement, their movement severely restricted within their own home. The Duke was later committed to the Tower on suspicion of high treason, where he remained for seven months. During this period, Mary stayed in the house in St James's Square, from where she repeatedly petitioned the government on her husband's behalf.[318] When reporting the incident to her anxious mother-in-law, she appeared to be a loyal distressed wife, making assurances that, 'unless my own state of health were so bad yt it would have made me a burthen to him in ye tower, I would have shut myself up with him, but all things considerd, its thought adviseable I should rather stay where I am'.[319] The earnestness of her tone here may, or may not, have been genuine. However, this seven-month period notably gave Mary her first opportunity to run a London household without the intervention of her husband.[320]

The Duke was finally admitted to bail in May 1723. However, his suspected treason appears to have done his social reputation little harm. From around 1724 onwards, regular newspaper reports referred to the extravagant entertainments hosted by the Duke and Duchess at their London town house. For example, on 23 January 1725, the *Daily Journal* reported: 'The same evening most of the Nobility and Quality met in their Masquerade Dresses at the Duke of Norfolk's in St James's Square and

[317] *Evening Post*, 25-27 October 1722.

[318] LRO DDSt, Box 97, f.23: Correspondence relating to imprisonment of the Duke of Norfolk in the Tower, 8 Oct 1722-25 May 1723'.

[319] LRO DDSt, Box 97, f.23: Duchess of Norfolk to Lady Howard, n.d.

[320] The Duke and Duchess subsequently argued about their household arrangements. For example, in 1725 Mary effectively overruled the Duke's wish to employ a Franciscan priest when she employed the Jesuit, Father Thomas Lawson as her personal chaplain. See F. Skeet, 'Maria Windfreda Francesca Shireburn', *Stonyhurst Magazine* (1925), p.8.

proceeded from thence to the Hay Market'.[321] The elevated rank of the Norfolks thus appears to have provided them with relative immunity from social exclusion. However, it was not until George II succeeded to the throne in 1727 that relations between the Norfolks and the monarchy began to improve. At the start of the new reign, the Hanoverian Government, led by Robert Walpole, adopted a more conciliatory policy towards English Catholics, prompting the Duke to attend the coronation of George II.[322] According to William Coxe, Queen Caroline followed Walpole's lead by paying 'a particular attention to those Roman Catholics, whose zeal in Favour of the Pretender had exposed them to the rigour of the laws.'[323] This involved organising private conferences with 'several Popish and Jacobite ladies, and particularly the duchess of Norfolk', with the result that 'liberal supplies of money [were awarded] to many of the most indigent' of the Catholic community.[324] As this shows, elite Catholic women based in London could play an important role in easing tensions between Papists and Hanoverians. The newspapers of the period also bear testimony to a rapprochement between the Norfolks and the royal family. The *Country Journal* of 18 May 1728 described 'an elegant Masquerade at the Duke of Norfolk's House in St. James's Square' which had been attended by the King himself: 'His Majesty went thither between 11 and 12, supp'd there, and was greatly pleased therewith, it being vastly magnificent'.[325] Prince Frederick is reported to have 'supp'd' with the Duke of Norfolk

[321] *Daily Journal*, 23 January 1725.

[322] F. J. McLynn, 'Issues and Motives in the Jacobite Rising of 1745', *The Eighteenth Century*, 23:2 (1982), p.102.

[323] W. Coxe, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole*, Volume 3 (London, 1816) p.383.

[324] Coxe, *Memoirs*, p.383: It is not entirely clear which Duchess of Norfolk Coxe is referring to since there were two Duchesses of Norfolk during Queen Caroline's incumbency as Queen consort. Mary Howard [née Blount] wife of the 9th Duke inherited the title in 1732.

[325] *Country Journal* or *The Craftsman*, 18 May 1728.

in January 1729 and, in September of that year, the Duke 'waited on his Majesty at Kensington'.[326]

However, the Duke and Duchess's weekly assemblies came to an abrupt end when they separated in March 1730. News of the separation prompted Sophia, Duchess of Kent, a recalcitrant socialite, to write; 'ye D & Dss of Norfolk are parted & by yt means there is an end of a weekly assembly at their house which was a greater entertainment to ye rest of ye town yn to me'. [327] This brings us to the fourth theme in this chapter, relating to Mary's biography, since, from this period onwards, her private life became the subject of gossip and speculation among her peers. For example, on hearing of the couple's separation, the Countess of Portland commented; 'its sad yt after above twenty years living together, they have not been able to accustom ymselves to each others humours.'[328] Such stories were fuelled by reports in the newspapers which led to further speculation about the cause of the separation. One report alleged that the Duke was intent on converting to 'the Established Church' so that he could 'take the Oaths and His Seat in the House of Lords'.[329] Although there is no evidence that this was the case, there is a suggestion that the Duke's wavering commitment to the Jacobite cause was a significant factor in the breakdown of the marriage.[330]

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[326] *Flying Post*, 11 January 1729; *Daily Post*, 20 September 1729.

[327] BL Egerton MS 1721, f.9: Sophia Grey, Duchess of Kent to William Bentinck, 13 March 1730.

[328] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.27: Countess of Portland to William Bentinck, 13 March 1730.

[329] *Echo or Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, 8 April 1730; Writing in 1924, the Catholic historian, Richard Cecil Wilton stated: 'In the *Catholic Encyclopedia* it is wrongly stated that Duke Thomas conformed [to Anglicanism]. This is a gross libel on a faithful Catholic. I have consulted the House of Lords, where he never took his seat'. R.C. Wilton, 'Early Eighteenth-Century Catholics in England', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 10:3 (1924), p.377.

[330] According to Henry Howard in his 'Memorials of the Howard Family' (1834), the 8th Duchess of Norfolk gave her husband up 'as having truckled to the usurper' although this account erroneously claims that the couple separated after the 1715 rebellion. This source is quoted in Skeet, 'Maria Windfreda', p.7.

According to the *Daily Courant*, Mary moved out of the house in St James's Square to a rented property in Poland Street on 24 March 1730.[331] It appears that this was an interim measure only, since the following June she moved to a house in Pall Mall.[332] This then served as her London home until her new house in Arlington Street was ready for occupation in December 1736. This sequence of centrally located London addresses demonstrates the Duchess's reluctance to relinquish her fashionable life in the capital despite her compromised position.

When the Duke died 'of a consumptive illness' on 23 December 1732, Mary ceased to be an estranged wife, and was able to adopt the more respectable identity of Dowager Duchess of Norfolk.[333] However, her transition to grieving widow was complicated by a damaging rumour which began to circulate in London society immediately after the Duke's death. In a letter to Charles Howard, 3rd Earl of Carlisle, his son-in-law, Thomas Robinson, wrote: 'The Duke of Norfolk died at two this morn; it is currently reported he was poisoned by the Jesuits some months since on account of his having made some declarations that carried the appearance as if he intended to turn Protestant.'[334] Edward Howard (1686-1777), who inherited the title and became 9th Duke of Norfolk, was sufficiently concerned by the rumour to arrange for a post-mortem to be performed on his brother's body. This was recounted in the *Daily Journal* of 3 January 1733:

> A Report being spread that his late Grace the Duke of Norfolk was inclinable to have come over to the Protestant Opinion as established, the Priests of the

[331] *Daily Courant*, 25 March 1730.

[332] *Caledonian Mercury*, 4 June 1730.

[333] *London Evening Post*, 21-23 December 1732.

[334] *Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle*, 6th Appendix to the 15th Report: Thomas Robinson to the Earl of Carlisle, 23 December 1732, p.93.

> severe Persuasion had poisoned him; on which his present Grace now Duke of Norfolk, had two of his Majesty's Physicians and two Surgeons to see the Corpse opened; which Operation was performed at his grace's House in St James's Square by Mr. Sherwood, an eminent Surgeon in Devonshire-Street[335]

Although no mention is made of the Duchess in the report, it surely posed a significant threat to her reputation. Not only was she closely associated with the Jesuit order, her personal chaplain being a Jesuit Priest, but she also stood to benefit financially from her estranged husband's death.

In accordance with aristocratic protocol, Mary put 'herself and Servants into deep mourning', presenting herself to London society as the appropriately afflicted, grieving widow.[336] However, that mourning seems to have been notably brief. In August 1733, the *Daily Journal* reported that 'a treaty of marriage is on foot and will speedily be consummated between Perry Widdrington and her Grace the Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk.[337] The younger son of a baronet and a childhood friend of Mary's, Peregrine Widdrington had joined rebel ranks in the Jacobite uprising in Preston in 1715. He had subsequently been arrested on a charge of high treason, stripped of his goods and chattels and imprisoned for a period of two years.[338] His rank was therefore notably inferior to that of the Duchess, suggesting that their relationship was purely based on personal attraction (at least on Mary's part). At some point in the year 1733, they started living together, dividing their time between the house which Mary had leased in Pall Mall and Widdrington's riverside villa in Chiswick, known as

[335] *Daily Journal*, 3 January 1733.

[336] *London Evening Post*, 28-30 December 1732.

[337] *Daily Journal*, Saturday 4 August 1733.

[338] Skeet, 'Maria Windfreda', p.8.

Corney House.[339] However, Mary persistently failed to acknowledge Widdrington as her husband, which has led historians to question whether the marriage ever actually took place.[340] Indeed, Francis Skeet has drawn attention to the fact that Mary's personal chaplain, Father Lawson, left her service very suddenly in January 1734, following an argument over Mary's refusal to declare her marital status. [341] This indicates that the couple were likely not married, and that the Jesuit chaplain therefore felt unable to remain in his position. If this is indeed the case, Mary's decision to remain single could well have been motivated by a desire to retain her newly acquired position of financial independence. She may also have feared that, in becoming Widdrington's wife, her identity as 'the first duchess of the kingdom' would be compromised.[342] That said, having chosen to cohabit with Widdrington, it was clearly in Mary's interests to ensure that he was successfully rehabilitated in elite society, especially given their decision to live in close proximity to St James's Palace. In 1736, he received an official pardon from George II, signed on his behalf by Queen Caroline. It seems reasonable to conjecture that Mary's constructive relationship with the Queen played an important part in bringing this pardon about.[343]

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[339] W. Draper, *Chiswick* (London: Anne Bingley, 1973), pp.147-48.

[340] Skeet, 'Maria Windfreda', p.8; Callow, 'Howard [née Shireburne], Mary'.

[341] Skeet, 'Maria Windfreda', p.8.

[342] Writing in 1737, Lord Chesterfield poked fun at the 'fatal disputes about rank' which occurred between the Duchess of Buckingham, 'a princess of the blood', and the Duchess of Norfolk, 'the first duchess of the kingdom' suggesting that both women were deeply conscious of their position in the social hierarchy. Catherine Sheffield, the Duchess of Buckingham (1681-1743) was an illegitimate daughter of James II. J.W. Croker, ed. *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk and her second husband, the Hon George Berkeley, 1712-1767*, 2 vols (London 1824), vol. 2, p.162: Lord Chesterfield to Lady Suffolk, 14 November 1737.

[343] University of Manchester Library, RCYH/1956: Pardon by George II, King of England, to Peregrine Widdrington, 19 July 1736.

The above evidence has shed light on Mary's complex personal history in the years leading up to the construction of 16 Arlington Street. Although widowhood had granted her a considerable degree of financial independence, her reputation had been tainted by her troubled personal life. Not only had she transgressed the bounds of propriety by separating from the Duke in 1730, but she had also failed to behave with the decorum considered appropriate following his sudden death two years later. I will argue, therefore, that the motivations behind the building of her new house in Arlington Street included two prime considerations. On the one hand, the location would have enabled her to reaffirm her status as a member of the aristocratic elite since Arlington Street, described by Horace Walpole as 'the ministerial street', was reputed to be one of the most prestigious addresses in the West End.[344] The Duchess's new neighbours included John Carteret, Earl of Granville; Charles Sackville, Earl of Middlesex; and George, 3rd Earl of Cholmondeley.[345] On the other, Mary is likely to have sought a degree of privacy in her domestic arrangements, especially in view of the various rumours in circulation about her private life. The plot, extending from the closed end of Arlington Street towards the park, was hidden away from the busy thoroughfares of the West End, thus offering her protection from the public gaze.

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[344] W.S. Lewis, ed. *Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 10, p.271: H. Walpole to G. Montagu, 1 December 1768: 'from my earliest memory, Arlington Street has been the ministerial street.'

Writing in 1706, Lady Wentworth referred to 'the great people in Arllington Street', adding 'I must goe in splender when I goe thear.' BL Add MS 31143, f.188: Lady Wentworth to Thomas Wentworth, 20 December 1706.

[345] Robert Walpole had lived at 17 Arlington Street from 1716 to 1732. He returned to the street in 1742, buying 5 Arlington Street on the opposite side of the road. Henry Pelham (Prime Minister from 1743 to 1754) purchased 22 Arlington Street in 1740 and commissioned William Kent to rebuild the house. See N. Thompson, '22 Arlington Street in the 18th Century' in P. Campbell, ed. *A House in Town: 22 Arlington Street, its Owners and Builders* (London: Batsford, 1984), p.103.

Part 2: Building and Decorating 16 Arlington Street

The Plot

The seventeenth-century house which Mary purchased from Thomas Gage of Hengrave in February 1734 was located alongside the road in Arlington Street, and had a long garden extending right to the border of the park.[346] A surviving plan of this property, dated 1687, shows that the plot had a depth of 238 feet, while its width of 30 feet along the street widened to 44 feet on the park side (fig.2.10).[347] Gibbs evidently recognised the site's potential to accommodate an entirely new layout, in which the house could be set back from the street and preceded by a gatehouse and forecourt, thereby giving the property a character of both grandeur and seclusion. This represented a notable contrast to the house Mary had shared with her husband in St James's Square in which the windows of the principal rooms overlooked the public space of the square, inviting the gaze of passers-by (fig.2.11). The proposed new layout at Arlington Street clearly necessitated the complete demolition of the existing house. This is referred to in a memorandum signed by the bricklayer, Thomas Michener, who agreed to 'carry off & clear away all ye rubbish occasion'd by & pulling down ye old building'. He was permitted to recycle some of these materials

[346] LRO DDSt, Box 120, f.7: Release to John Gage of Harleston from Christopher Davenport, 1687. In 1723, John Gage bequeathed the house to Thomas Gage of Hengrave who later sold it to the Duchess. I am grateful to Dr Francis Young for providing this information. In 1733, Mary had been granted 'a Common Recovery' on the property, thereby releasing her from the entail: LRO DDSt, Box 114, f.60: 'Articles of agreement between Mrs Delariviere Gage and Mary, Dutchess of Norfolk', 25 May 1733 (Delariviere Gage is described as the 'widow, mother and guardian of Sir Thomas Gage').

[347] The dimensions of the street frontage and depth are corroborated by the purchasing agreement of 1734: LRO DDSt, Box 120, f.9: Release from Sir Thomas Gage Baronet to her Grace Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk, 6 February 1733 [1734 NS].

provided that 'the best grey stock bricks' were employed on 'the two fronts'.[348] Gibbs's revised arrangement of the plot drew praise from a contemporary commentator in the *Grub Street Journal*: 'If between the front of every gentleman's house, and the street it stands in, court-yards could be made; as are before the two new houses lately built in Arlington-street […] they would be found very convenient, and the buildings more retired and quiet.'[349] This arrangement, providing greater privacy, is likely to have been appealing to Mary in light of her compromised reputation.

Once the building work had been completed, the new layout resulted in an almost processional route through the plot, whereby the house was approached, entered and experienced in a pre-ordained sequence in the manner of a palatial residence, thereby announcing the importance of its owner.[350] Mary and her visitors would have accessed the property through the imposing archway framed by intermittent vermiculated blocks, before proceeding across the courtyard to be greeted by liveried footmen at the entrance to the house itself (figs 2.1 and 2.12). The front door of the three-bay façade was situated on the left-hand side – not in the centre as claimed by Friedman.[351] In attempting to match up Gibbs's drawings in the Ashmolean museum with the design of 16 Arlington Street, Friedman erroneously stated that the elevation

[348] LRO DDSt, Box 120, f.2 Memorandum of Thomas Michener, n.d.

[349] *Grub Street Journal*, 24 October 1734. It is not clear which other house referred to here was also built with a courtyard. However, by 1791, all four adjacent houses to the north of number 16 had gatehouses leading to forecourts.

[350] An anecdote recorded by Elizabeth Montagu during a trip to Bath in 1740 sheds a revealing light on Mary's imperious behaviour and apparent sense of social superiority: 'The Dowager Duchess of Norfolk bathes, and being very tall she had like to have drowned a few women in the Cross Bath, for she ordered it to be filled till it reached her chin, and so all those below her stature as well as rank were forced to come out or drown.' Climenson, ed. *Elizabeth Montagu, Queen of the Bluestockings: Her correspondence from 1720 to 1761*, vol 1, p.42: Elizabeth Montagu to Duchess of Portland, January 1740.

[351] Friedman, *James Gibbs*, p.208.

represented in Gibbs's drawing of the upright and section of a London house described the original façade of this property (fig.2.13). However, as can be seen from the photograph taken in *c*.1935 (fig.2.6), the doorway was actually placed on the left-hand side, framed by those intermittent blocks, repeating the design of the carriageway on a smaller scale. This treatment of the arched opening, strongly characteristic of Gibbs's style, helped to identify the building as the work of the prestigious architect.[352]

In his memoir, Gibbs described 16 Arlington Street as 'a most convenient, useful building', thereby emphasising the utility of the design rather than its aesthetic appeal.[353] The debate over function versus form was a topical issue in this period, when Palladian purists were sometimes accused of seeking perfection at the expense of practicality. General Wade's house in Old Burlington Street, designed by Lord Burlington in 1723, adhered faithfully to the Palladian ideal, for example, but Horace Walpole was quick to point out its disadvantages in terms of domestic comfort; 'it is worse contrived on the inside than is conceivable, all to humour the beauty'.[354] 16 Arlington Street undoubtedly fell short of lofty classical ideals in terms of its form. The main house was three bays wide on the courtyard side but four bays wide on the façade overlooking the park, meaning that the building lacked symmetry in its overall design (figs 2.6 and 2.14). Moreover, the two brick facades displayed minimal architectural ornament. The architectural interest of the building was therefore chiefly confined to the interior. Here, however, the space was ingeniously arranged to reflect the requirements of its owner.

[352] The motif features particularly prominently on the exterior of St Martin in the Fields, London. It came to be known as the Gibbs surround.

[353] Soane Museum, *Gibbs MS*, p.97.

[354] Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 9, p.56: Horace Walpole to G. Montagu, 18 May 1748.

The Interiors of 16 Arlington Street

This section offers a comprehensive reconstruction of the house's interior as it appeared prior to the major building work undertaken in the 1930s. It draws on various sources which shed light on the original layout and appearance of the Duchess of Norfolk's house. The first of these is an inventory taken in 1791 to record the contents of the house following the death of its second owner, William Hall Gage (1718-91).[355] Although this record was made some decades after the Duchess's death, Gage had inherited the house in a fully furnished state.[356] As explained below, the Duchess employed some of the city's leading craftsmen to design bespoke furniture for the property, and it seems likely that Gage would have kept the most costly items in situ, especially in the principal reception rooms.[357] A second source of evidence is the autobiography of Lady Diana Cooper (1892-1986), who lived in the house from the age of six until her marriage in 1919. Her memoir sheds important light on the original spatial configuration of 16 Arlington Street. Finally, this reconstruction makes use of various surviving photographs held by the Historic England Archive, dating from

[355] ESRO SAS/G 50/17/108: 'Inventory of the goods in Lord Gage's house, Arlington Street, December 7th 1791'.

[356] ACM, T.70: Abstract of will, 22 April 1749, and codicils, 8 Aug. 1750, 12,13 March 1753 and 23 August 1754 of Mary [Maria Winifred Francisca] (Sherburne) (d.1754), wife of Thomas, 8th Duke of Norfolk: This is clearly stated in the codicil dated 8 August 1750: 'And she Gave all the Household Goods and Furniture (Plate excepted) belonging or deemed to belong to or used with her sd Dwelling house […] upon trust […] to go along with the sd Dwelling house in nature of Heir Looms'.

[357] A further piece of evidence suggesting that the Duchess's furniture remained in situ, at least until the early nineteenth century, is a surviving rental receipt relating to the property covering the period July 1800 to January 1804. At this time, Henry, the 3rd Viscount Gage (who inherited the house from his uncle in 1791) leased out 16 Arlington Street to the Duke of Bedford. The rent receipt reveals that Bedford was charged £140 for half a year's rent of the property, but *also* £260 for half a year's rent of the furniture. This must surely imply that the furniture was of exceptional quality and likely to have been that originally commissioned by the Duchess in the 1730s. I am grateful to Deborah Gage for an email of 23 July 2018, containing this information.

around 1925, which show certain aspects of the original fixed décor, besides recording the appearance of the two reception rooms which have not survived.[358]

The layout and decoration of the interior of 16 Arlington Street indicate that the house was primarily designed to provide a series of spaces for entertaining. Indeed, the Duchess's household account for the year 1744 reveals that she spent £522:10*s* on food and £200 on wine in that year alone, indicating that she was entertaining on an extravagant scale.[359] The account also shows that Mary spent a total of £112:10*s* on servants' wages, £68:14*s*:8½*d* on housekeeping and a further £31:7*s*:1*d* on servants' livery, suggesting that the Duchess maintained a significant degree of ceremony in the running of the household, of particular importance when entertaining elite guests.[360]

Having entered the front door, Mary's guests would have proceeded through the vestibule (now demolished) before arriving in the impressive hallway, where ionic marble columns screened the great top lit staircase.[361] The panels of the staircase were adorned with magnificent rococo ironwork, featuring calligraphic scrolls embellished with gilded leaves and delicate tendrils (fig.2.15). There appears to have been nothing quite like this in other town houses of the period, in which staircase ironwork was

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[358] An inventory also survives from this period, dated 1925. National Art Library, Sales Catalogues, OCLC 1030524624: Puttick & Simpson, *Catalogue of the contents of the House: 16 Arlington Street, S.W.*, 27 July 1925.

[359] LRO DDSt, Box 96, f.21: An Account of ye yearly Expences & outgoings, 1744: 'To ye House Bills for Do including Baker, Butcher, Poulterer, Butterman, Herbwoman, milkwoman, cheesmonger, fishmonger: £522:10, Wine cellar for Do: £200'.

[360] LRO DDSt, Box 96, f.21: An Account of ye yearly Expences & outgoings, 1744. Bridget Hill has emphasised that 'the employment of male servants - preferably in livery - went with a household's need to display its wealth and status', B. Hill, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p.30.

[361] Schlarman notes that in contrast to the 'horizontal arrangement of the country house', the London terraced house was 'a vertical way of living', making the staircase a primary feature. Schlarman, 'Social Geography', pp.22-23.

typically characterised by the rhythmic repetition of motifs.[362] Here, however, the asymmetry of the free-flowing design shows a willingness to experiment on the part of both patron and architect (figs 2.31 and 2.32). These curvaceous forms are echoed in the plasterwork of the broad frieze which runs in two parallel bands around the three walls of the stairwell (figs 2.19 and 2.32). The hallway represented the largest interior space and, according to the 1791 inventory, it was illuminated by a chandelier and accommodated a 'large loby clock' and a 'sedan chair'.[363] At the far end of the hall, two doorways guided the eye towards the final rooms in this ground-floor sequence, both offering uninterrupted views over the park (figs 2.16 and 2.17). The experience of the visitor as they progressed through 16 Arlington Street on this level thus mimicked the spatial progression to be found in many of London's palatial mansions such as Burlington House, nearby on Piccadilly, thereby drawing attention to its owner's elevated rank.[364]

The two ground-floor rooms overlooking the park are described in the 1791 inventory as the 'Dining Room' and the 'Park Parlour'. As revealed by a surviving photograph, the former was originally decorated with an ornate chimneypiece and elaborate plasterwork, including fixed rectangular picture frames surmounted by cornucopia and pendants of fruit and foliage. The motifs were presumably intended to reflect the room's function as a space for dining (fig. 2.17). In 1791, this room was furnished with two marble side boards and a large dining table with ten chairs, whilst the smaller adjoining parlour contained twelve chairs and two sofas, providing

[362] See, for example, the staircase at 44 Berkeley Square (figs i.1 and i.2) and the staircase at 22 Arlington Street built by William Kent for Sir Henry Pelham (1743-54).

[363] ESRO SAS/G 50/17/108.

[364] The entrance to Burlington House was preceded by a gateway and courtyard. Having entered the property, visitor could progress directly through the hallway to the room overlooking the garden.

appropriate spaces for entertaining. The room facing the courtyard on the ground floor is described in the 1791 inventory as a 'breakfast parlour'.[365] It was demolished in 1935, but a photograph has survived showing the chimneypiece and plaster frames which originally adorned the walls (fig.2.18). More modest in decoration than the dining room, this was perhaps employed by the Duchess on a day-to-day basis, offering a notably private space, its windows overlooking the enclosed courtyard.

To reach the first floor, Mary's guests would have ascended the great staircase, gaining a new perspective over the hallway and landing (figs 2.19 and 2.21). The four reception rooms on this level were inter-connected, meaning that guests could make a circuit of the principal rooms without having to retrace their steps (fig.2.20). Both the central stairwell and the adjoining 'skylight room' had no external walls, so Gibbs incorporated high coved ceilings culminating in lantern lights to illuminate them. A cross section drawing by Gibbs, thought to be one of his preparatory designs for the house, reveals how he manipulated the interior space to maximise the light source (fig.2.13).[366] It shows that both lanterns extended upwards into the second storey, resulting in a division between the front and rear rooms on this level. Gibbs solved this problem by introducing a passageway to the left of the stairwell lantern, thereby linking the two sections. Figure 2.21 indicates how the two surviving lantern lights relate to Gibbs's original drawing. The tall cuboid lantern over the stairwell consists of four vertical arched windows roofed over by an oval window with radiating spokes; a design which fully exploits the light source required to illuminate the entire stairwell and hallway. The coved ceiling of the skylight room ascends even higher than that of

[365] ESRO SAS/G 50/17/108.

[366] Although the arrangement of the two lantern lights relate closely to the interior as built, the actual orientation of the staircase differs from the drawing.

the stairwell, and Gibbs used a different lantern design here. The cuboid space is shallower, and its four walls are pierced by segmental windows whilst the vault is decorated with a central rosette and delicate stucco ornament. Another drawing by Gibbs, of an interior, can be related to this room with some certainty, since it replicates the details of the skylight and chimneypiece almost exactly (fig.2.22). However, the elaborate plasterwork in the drawing covers the walls and door surrounds, as well as the ceiling, suggesting that much of the original plasterwork has since been removed. Furthermore, in recording the contents of this room, the 1791 inventory lists only one picture and no mirrors, supporting the theory that the wall space was taken up by decorative plasterwork.[367] Finally, more recent evidence is provided both by Lady Diana Cooper's account, which describes the room as 'elaborately decorated', and, crucially, her wedding photograph.[368] This shows a restricted view of the skylight room through the left-hand doorway, revealing a glimpse of an elaborate plaster cartouche which resembles the motifs in Gibbs's drawing (figs 2.23 and 2.24). Not only was this one of the most impressive rooms in the house, but its lofty dimensions, ornate decoration and top lighting provided a contrast to the other two reception rooms on this floor, discussed below.

Above the breakfast parlour, but extending the full width of the building, was a large reception room illuminated by three windows overlooking the courtyard referred to in the 1791 inventory as the 'First Drawing Room'. According to this document, the room was furnished with two marble-topped pier tables, two pier glasses, a chimney glass and 'one gild chandelier'.[369] Based on their style and dimensions, it seems likely

[367] ESRO SAS/G 50/17/108.

[368] Cooper, *Rainbow*, p.18.

[369] *Ibid.*

that the pier table and mirrors shown in the early twentieth-century photograph of this space formed part of the original furnishings.[370] This photograph further reveals that the room was embellished by a gilded cornice and frieze running around the walls (seen in the mirror reflection) (fig.2.25). As noted in the previous chapter, a profusion of large-scale mirrors can be interpreted as a conspicuous display of wealth on the part of the patron. Arranging the mirrors here at opposite ends of the room would have created the illusion of extended space, besides helping to illuminate the room by reflecting the light from the chandelier in the evening.

At the far end of the house lay two further rooms, described in the inventory as the 'Park Side Drawing Room' and 'The late Lady's Dressing Room' (the latter referring to Gage's wife rather than the Duchess).[371] The former has retained its finely wrought marble chimneypiece decorated with busts of putti garlanded with oak leaves (fig.2.26), and its tall windows opening onto the balcony still offer impressive views across the park (fig.2.27). In Nathaniel Whittock's watercolour, showing the park-side façade in 1848, the wrought iron railings of this balcony are clearly visible (fig.2.14). Such balconies could play a role in entertaining since they provided an outdoor space on the first-floor level from which guests could enjoy the view. The space here would have served as an ideal vantage point from which to observe spectacular events held in the park, such as the extravagant firework display staged to celebrate the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle on 27 April 1749 (fig.2.28). Whilst there is no record of Mary's activities on this date, her neighbour, the Earl of Middlesex, invited the Prince and Princess of Wales to view the fireworks from his house, also located on the west side

[370] As discussed below, the pier table may have been carved by John Boson.

[371] ESRO SAS/G 50/17/108. Gage's wife, Lady Elizabeth Gage died in 1783.

of Arlington Street.[372] The rooms on the second storey of 16 Arlington Street have since been rebuilt, but originally this level provided bedroom accommodation. Finally, from this floor, 'two wooden flights of stairs' led to the servants' sleeping quarters in the garret.[373]

Gibbs's carefully planned design of 16 Arlington Street ensured that the activities of the serving staff were segregated from those of Mary and her elite visitors, an advantage which is likely to have suited the rank-conscious Duchess. The servants even had a separate route into the house, with the result that a strict hierarchy was maintained in the traffic of the household. According to Cooper, they would enter the property via the gatehouse, from which a staircase descended to the 'huge kitchens' below.[374] This arrangement also meant that the fumes and noise associated with food preparation were kept well away from the grand reception areas. The servants could then access the main house via a subterranean passage which ran beneath the courtyard.[375] At the far end of this lower ground level was 'a fine big room looking on to Green Park', and a capacious servants hall. The basement also accommodated a butler's pantry, a steward's room and a still room.[376] A subsidiary staircase connected the basement with all four upper storeys of the house, so that the servants could access the reception rooms on the first floor without using the main staircase. Finally, the lodge overlooking the street provided generous accommodation for the porter, with his

[372] 'We hear that their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, with the young Princesses, will view the Fireworks at the Right Honourable the earl of Middlesex's House in Arlington Street.' *Whitehall Evening Post*, 20-22 April 1749.

[373] Cooper, *Rainbow*, p.18.

[374] *Ibid.*, p.17.

[375] *Ibid.* 'Huge kitchens were beneath the lodge, so that the food had a long cold journey before it reached the house'.

[376] ESRO SAS/G 50/17/108.

bedroom located on the upper floor; an arrangement which would have greatly contributed to the security of the property.[377]

The Craftsmen at 16 Arlington Street

As we have seen, 16 Arlington Street provided an impressive sequence of interiors designed to proclaim the Duchess's wealth and taste. Such a display meant employing craftsmen of the very highest quality. It is significant that those known to have worked on Mary's house were amongst the most fashionable, and acknowledged as the most skilled, in the period. Friedman identified five of the craftsmen employed in the house's construction: George Mercer (mason); Thomas Michener (bricklayer); Thomas Phillips (carpenter); Thomas Wagg (smith); William Wilton (plasterer).[378] However, this study can identify a further fifteen, on the basis of a list of expenses, evidently relating to the Arlington Street house, which names a total of twenty workmen involved in the commission. The list appears to be a summary of costs as it bears no date and provides details of substantial payments, written out in a meticulous hand (fig.2.29).[379] The highest sums were awarded to the bricklayer, mason and carpenters, all of whom had previously worked for Gibbs on various building projects in the capital.[380] They could therefore be relied on for their professionalism and the high quality of their work. However, as noted by Christine Casey in relation to Gibbs's commissions, the agency of the client tended to play an important part in the finishing

[377] The porter, Thomas Patrick, received a gross sum of £50 and an annuity of £20 according to the terms of Mary's will: ACM, T 70 Abstract of will, 22 April 1749, and codicils. See 2nd Codicil dated 12 March 1753 and 4th codicil dated 23rd August 1754.

[378] Friedman, *James Gibbs*, p.209.

[379] LRO DDSt, Box 94, f.5 List of Workmen.

[380] For example, George Mercer, the mason had worked for Gibbs at Marylebone Court House (1729-33) and Oxford Market House (1726-37). The carpenter, Thomas Philips been assigned the carpenter's contract for two churches designed by Gibbs: St. Martin in the Fields and St Peter's, Vere Street.

of the interior.[381] There are two features of the original décor at 16 Arlington Street which particularly stand out: first, the elaborate plasterwork; and second, the graceful, free-flowing ironwork on the staircase. The decorative effect of both could loosely be described as rococo; a style which had emerged in France in the 1720s, characterised by curved asymmetric ornamentation.

As elucidated above, at least two of the rooms at 16 Arlington Street were embellished with plasterwork: the dining room and the skylight room. The plasterer, William Wilton, received the colossal sum of £1041, the highest single expense laid out on decoration alone.[382] Wilton was one of the leading exponents of his craft and, around 1740, was awarded the commission to decorate the court room in the Foundling Hospital for which he created an elaborate rococo ceiling.[383] The fact that Mary spent such a large sum on ornamental plasterwork in her new house suggests that she hoped to impress her visitors through the display of ostentatious craftsmanship. She may also have wished to make her house more distinctive. Such a proliferation of decorative plasterwork seems to have been relatively unusual in small-scale town houses of the period, but had been practised by Gibbs elsewhere. A comparable example is Gibbs's parlour at 11 Henrietta Street, now reconstructed in London's Victoria and Albert Museum (fig.2.30).

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[381] C. Casey, 'Ornament and Craftsmanship in the Architecture of James Gibbs', *Georgian Group Journal*, 27 (2019), p.38.

[382] Although native to England, Wilton has been credited with producing a version of rococo which synthesised the influence of Swiss and Italian stuccoists, such as Giuseppe Artari and Giovani Bagutti, with designs from French pattern books. J. Banham, *Encyclopedia of Interior Design* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), p.1087.

[383] As a veteran Marylebone developer, Wilton is likely to have worked with Gibbs on house building in Henrietta Street. P. Guillery, 'James Gibbs and the Cavendish-Harley Estate in Marylebone' *Georgian Group Journal*, 27 (2019), p.55.

The total sum spent on smith's work amounted to £750: 28*s*, indicating that ironwork was an important aspect of the house's design. That on the ornate staircase has so far been attributed exclusively to Thomas Wagg, based on evidence provided by his day books and ledgers (figs 2.15 and 2.31). These confirm that he received a total of £262: 3*s* for work executed for 'Her Grace the Dutchess of Norfolk' during the year 1736 (the same figure provided and confirmed by the list of expenses).[384] Included in this figure was £179: 10*s* for 'Ironwork for the great stairs & fixing do'.[385] However, this still leaves the question of how the three remaining smiths were employed in the commission. Two of these ironworkers, Thomas Stephens and Jean Montigny, merit attention since they received substantial sums of £300 and £140 respectively for unspecified work. They are both known to have been influenced by the great French ironworker, Jean Tijou (1687-1712).[386] Tijou's work would certainly have been very familiar to Mary, as he had supplied the wrought iron railings and gates at Worksop Manor for the 8th Duke of Norfolk around 1704.[387] Stephens has been described as 'capable of excellent forged work in the Tijou tradition', but the precise nature of his contribution to the Duchess's house is unclear.[388] He was later employed by Matthew Brettingham to work on the staircase of Norfolk House in St James's Square after it was rebuilt around 1750 for Mary's in-laws, the 9th Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, but this bears no resemblance to the staircase at 16 Arlington Street.[389] There is, however,

[384] See Friedman, *James Gibbs*, p.209.

[385] TNA C.109.27: Daybooks and Ledgers of Thomas Wagg, Book V, p.47.

[386] E. Saunders, 'Biographical Dictionary of English Wrought Iron Smiths of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Volume of the Walpole Society*, 67 (2005), p.239 and p.351.

[387] Robinson, *Dukes of Norfolk*, p.153.

[388] Saunders, 'Biographical Dictionary', p.315 and p.346; Stephens is also known to have been a close associate of Montigny, who bequeathed a silver watch to him in his will.

[389] 'Between 1749 and 1751 Stephens was paid £550 for the smith work at Norfolk House, St James's Square', Saunders, 'Biographical Dictionary', p.346.

a case for suggesting Montigny, whose reputation rested primarily on his skills in drawing and design, as the designer of Mary's swirling rococo handrail, if not its actual fabrication. According to Edward Saunders, Montigny's knowledge of the latest French pattern books enabled him to produce 'sophisticated work which few, if any, of his English contemporaries could match'.[390] Significantly, he is thought to have designed the gates in front of Devonshire House on Piccadilly, which was undergoing construction at the same time as 16 Arlington Street (fig.2.33).[391] Montigny's style in these gates bears a distinct resemblance to the ironwork in Mary's house, especially in terms of the generous C scrolls accented with gilded acanthus leaves. Wagg, on the other hand, seems to have been chiefly commissioned to execute relatively mundane tasks, such as making locks, fenders and grates, giving further weight to the suggestion that the design and installation of the staircase at 16 Arlington Street was a collaborative enterprise, with Montigny primarily responsible for its design.[392]

The carvers and gilders employed at 16 Arlington Street were also leading practitioners of their craft, suggesting that Mary was competing with the most fashionable members of society. For example, John Boson, who received £382 16*s* for carving work, had carried out several commissions for Lord and Lady Burlington, whilst Peter Hasert, the Duchess's cabinet maker, had been employed by Robert Harley, 1st Earl of Oxford, at Dover Street and Wimpole Hall. [393] However, arguably

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[390] Saunders, 'Biographical Dictionary', p. 315. Saunders also notes that Montigny was on close terms with Tijou since he made personal bequests to various members of the Tijou family in his will.

[391] *Ibid.*

[392] Saunders also notes that Wagg was employed on many of the royal palaces but that none of his work was 'of architectural interest', Saunders 'Biographical Dictionary', p.361.

[393] 'Boson, John: London; carver (active 1720-1743)' and 'Hasert, Peter: London cabinet maker and looking-glass maker (1692-1746)', *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840,* eds, G. Beard and C. Gilbert (Leeds, 1986), *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/dict-

the most influential patron of the arts in London during the 1730s was Prince Frederick, and Mary may well have drawn inspiration from his predilection for 'fine and showy decorative craftsmanship'.[394] Renowned for his Francophile taste, he has frequently been viewed as an early advocate of the rococo style.[395] Moreover, following the major rift with his parents in 1737, he took up residence in Mary's former home in St James's Square, bringing him closer to her own social orbit.[396] The property was loaned to him by the 9th Duke and Duchess of Norfolk and he remained there until 1741. Notably, two of the craftsmen responsible for the carving work at 16 Arlington Street – John Boson and Joseph Duffour – also undertook several commissions for Frederick.[397] Chimneypieces were one of Boson's specialities and he is known to have carved a marble chimneypiece for Frederick at Carlton House (*c*.1732), suggesting he may have been responsible for that seen in the park side drawing room in Arlington Street (fig.2.26).[398] Duffour, meanwhile, was primarily a frame-maker who undertook several commissions for the prince in the 1730s and 40s. As suggested by his trade card, his rococo frames were typically intricate in their design (fig.2.34). He may have crafted the gilded frame in the first-floor drawing

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english-furniture-makers/b [accessed 19 November 2020]. Hasert was paid the colossal sum of £770:19s for 'cabinet work' at 16 Arlington Street. LRO DDSt, Box 94, f.5.

[394] K. Rorschach, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales as Collector and Patron', *Volume of Walpole Society*, 55 (1989-90), p.36.

[395] *Ibid*., p.1. Rorschach notes that Frederick had 'significant contact with rococo artists living in London' although his association with rococo was 'short-lived'.

[396] Frederick often associated with prominent figures (including those associated with Jacobitism) who were politically opposed to his father's government. See R. Eagles, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales, the 'Court' of Leicester House and the 'Patriot' opposition to Walpole, c.1733-1742', *The Court Historian*, 21:2 (2016), pp.140-156.

[397] Boson received £382: 6*s* for 'carving work' alone, whilst Duffour was paid £290: 2*s* for 'carving & gilding'. LRO DDSt, Box 94, f.5.

[398] 'Boson, John: London; carver (active 1720-1743)'.

room, adorned with a twisting vine motif, seen in figure 2.25. As noted earlier, the pier table in this photograph is also likely to have formed part of the Duchess's original furniture, perhaps carved by Boson.[399] Four gracefully curved legs adorned with acanthus foliage support the marble table and they are bridged by a stretcher decorated with dolphins, their scrolling tails calling to mind those dolphins adorning Prince Frederick's barge, designed by Kent, but also carved by Boson (figs 2.35 and 2.36).

Mary and Gibbs evidently took advantage of the house's central location to ensure that it was decorated in accordance with the very latest fashions, and to the very highest standards of craftsmanship. All the aforementioned craftsmen appear to have been based in London, enabling them to benefit from the competition between elite patrons then living in the capital.[400] The most prosperous amongst them were located in the West End: John Boson leased a house from Lord Burlington at Savile Row, whilst William Wilton occupied a house in Argyll Place, its interiors displaying plasterwork 'of exceptional quality'.[401] Mary would have had the opportunity to inspect examples of their craftmanship, either in their own residences or those of their patrons, before commissioning them to work on 16 Arlington Street. By sharing craftsmen with the most significant members of elite society in the period, the Duchess was well placed to assert herself as a wealthy and fashionable member of society as she embarked on a new phase in her life.

[399] The 1791 inventory refers to two marble topped pier tables and two pier glasses in this room: ESRO SAS/G 50/17/108.

[400] See Aymonino and Guerci 'Refurbishment of Northumberland House', p.84.

[401] *SoL*, vols 31 and 32, pp.284-307 and pp.517-45.

Jacobitism and the decorative grammar of the house

In addition to the house's role in enhancing Mary's social status, a more complex question arises in assessing whether her religious and/or political loyalties found expression in the design and decoration of her house. It is surely significant that she chose to engage the services of an architect who shared her religious and, possibly, her political outlook. Gibbs was a practising Catholic who was closely associated with various members of the Catholic and/or Jacobite elite. His first important patron had been John Erskine, the Earl of Mar (1675-1732), who had led the Jacobite uprising in 1715, and he was later patronised by the 2nd Earl of Lichfield and the 3rd Duke of Beaufort, both known to harbour strong Jacobite sympathies.[402] Mary was clearly associated with this network of Jacobite aristocrats, since she named the heirs of both the Lichfield and Beaufort families as remainder beneficiaries in her will.[403] Her religious and political affiliation may also have played a part in influencing the choice of craftsmen. Joseph Duffour and Peter Hasert are both known to have been practising Catholics.[404] Indeed, the latter disappeared abroad shortly after 1745, leading to speculation that he had been actively involved in the Jacobite rebellion.[405]

In a number of recent studies, scholars have drawn attention to the widespread practice of incorporating Jacobite iconography into the interior décor of various houses, in which owners wished to express loyalty to the exiled Stuarts. As an

[402] See M. Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition, 1688-1760: Treacherous Objects, Secret Places* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.49.

[403] ACM: T 70 Abstract of will, 22 April 1749, and codicils, 8 Aug 1750, 12,13 March 1753 and 23 August 1754 of Mary [Maria Winifred Francisca] (Sherburne) (d.1754).

[404] National Portrait Gallery, 'British Picture Framemakers, 1600-1950' https://www.npg.org.uk/research/conservation/directory-of-british-framemakers/d#DU

[405] Hasert was also fined for refusing to take the oath of fidelity as a Papist in 1692. See 'Hasert, Peter: London cabinet maker and looking glass maker (1692-1746)'.

example, Katharine Clark has convincingly argued that the plasterwork in the saloon at Callaly Castle in Northumberland was suffused with Jacobite symbolism intended to be understood and appreciated by those invited to enter the space.[406] However, to the best of my knowledge, no town houses have yet been identified as expressing Jacobite iconography. The situation of 16 Arlington Street, so close to the seat of Hanoverian power, would have made any expression of Jacobite loyalty particularly provocative. Consequently, if Mary and Gibbs did incorporate political iconography into the house's interior, they surely would have recognised a need to cloak such meaning in considerable ambiguity.

Nevertheless, certain features of the décor at 16 Arlington Street invite a political interpretation. The first of these relates to oak leaves. Widely employed as a decorative motif in the eighteenth-century interior, the oak leaf was sometimes adopted to express Englishness or a sense of lineage. However, from a Jacobite perspective, it could be used to signify allegiance to the exiled Stuarts, and, at 16 Arlington Street, there is a strong case to suggest that such an interpretation was intended.[407] In 1717, when Mary had been the mistress of Worksop Manor, one of the residents of the estate

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[406] K.R.P. Clark, 'Getting Plastered: Ornamentation, Iconography, and the "Desperate Faction"', in Denise Amy Baxter and Meredith Martin, eds, *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Constructing Identities and Interiors* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p.93. Both Richard Hewlings and Jane Clark have identified Jacobite allusions in Lord Burlington's villa at Chiswick. R. Hewlings, 'Chiswick House and Gardens: Appearance and Meaning' in T. Barnard and J. Clark, eds, *Lord Burlington: Architecture, Art and Life* (London: Hambledon Press, 1995), pp.1-149 and J. Clark, '"Lord Burlington is Here"', Barnard and Clark, *Lord Burlington*, pp.251-311.

[407] Kathryn Clark described the oak leaf as 'one of the most obvious examples of Stuart political symbolism'

See Clark, 'Getting Plastered', p.94; Moreover, Pittock has described the oak as 'the badge of the Stuarts since at least the seventeenth century' owing to the fact that the former exiled monarch, Charles II, had hidden in an oak tree during the Battle of Worcester, Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition*, p.165.

described decorating the entire village and church with sprigs of oak to celebrate the Pretender's birthday:

> my friend Fanny & my selfe has endevour'd to express our reguarde to [this good Holy day] by adorning ye Church, this house, the shops and all other Houses that woud let us with oke. We likewise wear it ourselves and put it in all peoples Hatts that pass by or that are in the Town and have had ye Bells rung.[408]

When considered in this context, the marble chimneypiece in the drawing room overlooking the park could be interpreted as anticipating Jacobite triumph. The two putti wreathed in oak leaves and crowned with scallop shells would then symbolise the hoped-for restoration of the Stuart monarch (fig.2.37). Moreover, the fleur-de-lys which appears to sprout from each putto's head could be interpreted as referring to the French crown, a loyal supporter of the exiled Stuarts.[409]

Second, it is worth drawing attention to the prevalence of roses and sunflowers in the decorative plasterwork and woodwork in the Duchess's house, including the pulvinated frieze above the door frame of the park side drawing room (fig.2.38). The white rose symbolized the House of Stuart and was thus subsequently adopted as a Jacobite symbol by Charles Edward Stuart, the 'Young Pretender' (1720-88), who wore a white cockade based on the rose in his bonnet. The sunflower also held symbolic significance to the Jacobites, since it was associated with both restoration

[408] ACM Howard of Norfolk MS C114: Phillis Balguy to Mr Heaton Junior at Sheffield, 10 June 1717; see also G. Glickman, *The English Catholic Community, 1688-1745: Politics, Culture and Ideology* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), p.84 for discussion of how Jacobitism was used 'at a defiantly festive level.'

[409] See Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition*, p.162.

and loyalty.[410] Correspondingly, when these two flowers were presented in combination, their meaning could be interpreted as loyalty to the House of Stuart. Two further pieces of evidence suggesting that Mary used these two flowers to express Jacobite loyalty can be found by looking at the Shireburne estate in Lancashire. The first relates to the decoration of two garden buildings built by her father, Sir Nicholas, at Stonyhurst. The urn surmounting the doorway of each building appears to be adorned with sunflowers and roses, most likely proclaiming Nicholas's loyalty to his former master, James II (fig.2.39).[411] The second is the monument which Mary commissioned for Widdrington in the Shireburne family vault at Great Mitton, following his death in 1748. In the epitaph which she composed for his memorial, Mary made specific reference to his involvement in the 'Preston affair 1715, whear he lost his Fortune with his health by a long confinement in Prison', indicating that she took pride in Widdrington's personal sacrifice in support of the Jacobite cause.[412] Crowning the monument is an urn adorned with a carved wreath composed of roses and sunflowers, echoing the resonant combination of these flowers in the Arlington Street house, and bolstering the case for their Jacobite symbolism in that context (figs 2.40a and 2.40b).

[410] *Ibid.*, pp.167-68; See also Hewlings, 'Chiswick House and Gardens', p.144.

[411] For a description of the garden design at Stonyhurst, see Anon, 'Stonyhurst College I Lancs': 534-42.

[412] This is striking, considering the pardon which Widdrington had received from George II in 1736. It may show that Mary felt more at liberty to express her true allegiance in a monument located so far from the seat of Hanoverian power.

Part 3: Inhabiting 16 Arlington Street

The Duchess took up residence in her new house in mid-December 1736, and it continued to be her principal abode until her death in 1754.[413] Surprisingly, there is scant evidence concerning her use of the house during this eighteen-year period. The newspapers soon lost interest in reporting on her activities and shifted their attention to her successor, Mary Howard (née Blount), 9th Duchess of Norfolk (*c.*1702-73), who had set about forging royal connections and establishing herself as a leading figure in society as soon as she had come into the title.[414] Thus, to some extent, Mary appears to have been eclipsed by her more diplomatic and charismatic sister-in-law. Individual comments on 16 Arlington Street are also conspicuous by their absence. Many of the most prolific social commentators of the period, including Horace Walpole, who only lived across the road, on the east side of Arlington Street, and Mary Delany, who had attended many of the balls hosted by Mary in St James's Square, failed to comment on the house, or Mary's activities there.[415] This is perplexing, especially since the house's layout was evidently designed to provide a series of spaces for entertaining. Moreover, as noted above, her household accounts indicate that she entertained on an extravagant scale in Arlington Street.

One possible explanation for the silence of contemporary commentators may be that Mary's social gatherings in the new house were dictated by political motives;

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[413] *Daily Journal*, 15 December 1736. It seems that Mary rarely undertook the 200-mile journey to her family estate in Stonyhurst. Following Widdrington's death in 1748, she inherited a life interest in Corney House, Widdrington's villa in Chiswick. In 1748, Mary commissioned Gibbs to carry out various improvements at this property, See Soane Museum Collection, *Gibbs MS*, p.97.

[414] Haynes, 'Of her own Making', p.85.

[415] See reference to Duchess of Norfolk's assembly held at St James's Square on 6 March 1729: Llanover, ed. *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delany*, 3 vols (London, 1861), vol. 1, p.195.

perhaps she primarily performed the role of a Jacobite hostess there. If so, it would help to explain why no account has survived of these assemblies, since the Jacobite movement was, by its very nature, clandestine.[416] Significantly, none of Mary's correspondence has survived from the period leading up to the 1745 rebellion, suggesting that it may have been destroyed. If Mary's assemblies in the early 1740s did indeed have a political agenda, the secluded nature of the interiors at Arlington Street, especially the skylight room which had no windows, would have provided an appropriate setting. And it was by no means unprecedented for elite Jacobite women to perform such a role. A comparative example can be found in Catherine Sheffield, dowager Duchess of Buckingham (1681-1743) – an illegitimate daughter of James II – and an ardent supporter of the exiled Stuarts. During her widowhood, Catherine hosted many concerts and theatrical entertainments at Buckingham House, and it appears that such events also provided opportunities for clandestine Jacobite operations.[417] Mary may well have followed Catherine's example by hosting her own politically motivated gatherings in Arlington Street. Indeed, it could be argued that women were at an advantage when performing such a role. As noted by Pittock, Jacobite women tended to be less liable to prosecution than their male counterparts since they were perceived as lacking political agency.[418]

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[416] McLynn has proffered that there was an active resurgence of Jacobitism in London during the 1740s. McLynn, 'Issues and Motives', p.99.

[417] Hone, 'Pope, Bathurst and the Duchess of Buckingham', p.402. Catherine is known to have displayed a full-length portrait of her royal father, James II, by Godfrey Kneller in the salon of Buckingham House. 'An inventory of the Pictures at Buckingham House taken after the death of the Duchess in 1743, quoted in E. Einberg, 'A picture of pride: Did Hogarth paint the Duchess of Buckingham?', *The British Art Journal*, 3:2 (2002), p.7.

[418] Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition*,

The next significant event to be recorded in relation to the Arlington Street house was the death of Widdrington in February 1748. By this date, the newspapers appear to have abandoned the notion that Mary and Widdrington were joined in wedlock since the report simply states, 'On Friday died, at her Grace the Dowager Dutchess of Norfolk's in Arlington Street, the Hon Peregrine Widdrington, Esq, Brother to the late Lord Widdrington.'[419] Despite Widdrington's uncertain status in relation to the Duchess, Mary arranged for him to be buried in the Shireburne family vault at Great Mitton alongside her parents and ancestors, thereby according him the status of a husband. As elucidated above, the inscription, drawing attention to his role in the 1715 rebellion, strongly suggests that both he and Mary held firm to the ideological tenets of Jacobitism throughout their lives (fig.2.40a).

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to an episode which occurred towards the end of Mary's life which raises the possibility that she may have been involved in a further Jacobite plot. In September 1750, Charles Edward Stuart paid a secret visit to England with a view to making another attempt on the English throne. Having amassed thousands of weapons at Anvers in preparation for an invasion, he landed at Dover on 13 September and travelled in disguise directly to London, arriving three days later.[420] He remained in the capital for six days, staying at the house of Lady Primrose Campbell, another prominent Jacobite, in Essex Street, south of the Strand. A surviving letter, written by Mary on 30 August 1750, suggests that she may have been aware of this visit in advance. It is addressed to her cousin, Edward Weld (1705-61), ostensibly to congratulate him on the birth of his baby son.[421] However, on the reverse

[419] *Newcastle Courant*, 6 February 1748.

[420] M. Pittock, 'Charles Edward [Charles Edward Stuart; styled Charles; *known as* the Young Pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie] (1720-1788)', *ODNB* (2014), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5145.

[421] Thomas Bartholemew Weld was born on 24 August 1750.

side of this letter, two verses have been transcribed from a Jacobite song, bearing the title, 'He Comes'[422]:

> To Arms to Arms to Arms repair
> Brave bravely now, your wrongs declare
> See Godlike Charles's Bosom glow
> At Albion's fate and bleeding Woe
>
> Away away, fly, haste away
> Crush crush ye Vile Usurper's Sway
> Your lawfull King at length restore
> And Britons shall be slaves no more.

This would seem to indicate that Mary and her cousin, Weld, knew of Charles's impending visit to London. The prince's arrival in the capital prompted an urgent meeting of fifty leading English Jacobites in a house in Pall Mall, only a short distance from Arlington Street.[423] However, Charles failed to convince the assembled company of the likely success of his scheme and he was obliged to return to France a few days later, on 22 September. Unfortunately, a full list of the fifty Jacobites has not survived but it is tempting to speculate that Mary attended this meeting.

[422] Dorset History Centre: D/WLC/C/20: Letter from Mary (née Shireburne), Dowager Duchess of Norfolk to Edward Weld of Lulworth Castle, 30 August 1750.

[423] Pittock, 'Charles Edward'.

Conclusion

Mary spent her last summer seeking relief from her ailments in the spa town of Tunbridge Wells.[424] As elucidated in the opening to this chapter, she died there at the end of September 1754, but, the following week, her corpse was conveyed to Arlington Street for the ceremony of lying in state. A surviving list of expenses incurred by one Mr George Wilmot in relation to the Duchess's estate testifies to her considerable wealth at the time of her death. Wilmot charged £32: 6*d* for attending the Duchess's house in Arlington Street 'day and night from 25th September through to 18th October' 1754 during which time he compiled a detailed inventory of the house's goods and furniture, including the pictures, carvings, decorations, books, and the gold and silver plate. Although the inventory itself, very unfortunately, has not come to light, Wilmot's account indicates that cataloguing the Duchess's extensive household goods was an intensely time-consuming task. Such was the value of the house's contents that he was paid a further £10:13*s*:1*d* to 'lye in the Dutchess's House to keep Possession and take care of the Goods and effects there from the 19th of October to the 19th November, 1754'.[425]

In her will, Mary left her family manor house at Stonyhurst and the Shireburne estates to her cousin, Edward Weld, mentioned above.[426] However, curiously, she added a codicil to the will on 8 August 1750, leaving the Arlington Street house and its

[424] ACM, T128 Executor's account of the estate of Mary (Sherburne), Duchess of Norfolk: 'Paid John Smith for the use of a House and furniture at Tunbridge Wells during the summer season of the year 1754 £50'.

[425] LRO DDSt Box 100, f.14 George Wilmot's bill relating to the Estate of Mary, late Duchess Dowager of Norfolk, 25 September 1754 to 12 February 1756.

[426] Edward Weld was the grandson of her paternal aunt, Elizabeth Shireburn.

contents to William Hall Gage, a politician and former equerry to Prince Frederick.[427] It is not entirely clear why Mary bequeathed such a valuable asset to someone outside her kinship group. However, social commentary of the period suggests that Mary was frequently in the company of Lady Gage, William's mother, who had died in 1749.[428] Moreover, Mary also left generous bequests to William's two younger siblings. Theresa Gage received £7,000 and some diamond earrings and Thomas Gage inherited Mary's collection of plate, valued at £1789 18s.[429] Baird has suggested that the Duchess was 'trying to reignite the fortunes of another devotedly Catholic family', which had lost its wealth through support of the Jacobite cause.[430] However, Gage had embarked on a successful parliamentary career and was heir to his family estate in Firle Place.[431] Whatever the key motivation, Mary's decision to leave her London town house to her friend's offspring, demonstrates the extent to which such a property could be treated as a non-entailed asset, free from the 'notions of integrity and continuity attached to the country house'.[432]

[427] ACM, T 70 Abstract of will, 22 April 1749, and codicils, 8 Aug. 1750, 12,13 March 1753 and 23 August 1754 of Mary [Maria Winifred Francisca] (Sherburne) (d.1754). The will of 1749 had left the Arlington Street house to Sir Edward Gasgoigne (1697-1750), 6th Baronet of Parlington, West Yorkshire, husband of Mary's cousin, Mary [née Hungate] (*c*.1677-1749). 'Gage Hon. William Hall (1718-91)' History of Parliament Online: http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1715-1754/member/gage-hon-william-hall-1718-91.

[428] HMC The Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, Diary of the first Viscount Perceval, later Earl of Egmont, 8 January 1729/30: I passed the evening at my cousin Southwell's where there was music and a great deal of company, Duchess of Norfolk, Lady Gaze [Gage] '; Elizabeth Montagu also refers to Mary being in the company of 'Miss Gage' and Lady Widdrington' in Bath in 1739.

[429] LRO DDSt, Box 96, f.14: List of Silver Plate bequeathed to Thomas Gage, 1754.

[430] Baird, *Mistress of the House*, p.51.

[431] William inherited Firle Place in December 1754 following the death of his father, Thomas Gage.

[432] See Stewart, *Town House*, p.61.

This case study has argued that a knowledge of Mary Howard's personal history is a crucial factor in contextualising the design and construction of 16 Arlington Street. By drawing out key themes from Mary's biography, including her family's commitment to the exiled Stuarts, her reputation as a leading London hostess during her marriage to the Duke, and the troubled circumstances relating to her separation and subsequent widowhood, it has shed light on Mary's probable motivations for commissioning the building of a costly London town house at this stage in her life. Like many elite widows, Mary decided to reside in the heart of London's West End rather than retreating to a country estate. It seems that she never relinquished her desire to live in London, even when she became the subject of gossip and unwanted attention in the daily newspapers.

The house's layout, comprising a gatehouse, forecourt and succession of interior spaces, underscores the importance Mary attached to ceremony in her domestic arrangements. Moreover, Mary spared no expense on decorating and furnishing 16 Arlington Street, creating an elegant circuit of reception rooms ideally suited for elite entertaining. However, it appears that only Mary's privileged guests were able to experience the full grandeur of the property. The evidence presented here therefore raises the possibility that Mary fulfilled the role of a political hostess, promoting the Jacobite cause. In particular, this chapter has drawn attention to the suggestive iconography featured in the house and the fact that Mary was entertaining extravagantly in the period leading up to the 1745 rebellion. Whilst such theories remain speculative, they help to enrich our understanding of Mary's ambitions for the house and its possible function in relation to her political ideology.

Part Two: LOCALITY

Chapter 3

Living amidst the Ruins: The Wives and Widows of Whitehall

Situated to the north of Westminster between St James's Park and the River Thames, the Whitehall neighbourhood had a great deal to recommend it as an elite place of residence in the eighteenth century. Yet, for John Gwynn, author of *London and Westminster Improved* (1766), its appearance left much to be desired. Commenting on the layout of Whitehall's Privy Garden, he lamented: 'The present form of this advantageous spot is by no means equal to its situation and exhibits at best but an indigested heap of whims and absurdity'. Even more scathing were his comments on Scotland Yard which he dismissed as 'nothing more than a scene of desolation and deformity'.[433] John Rocque's map of 1746 certainly shows the awkward topography of the Whitehall area, compared with the ordered streets surrounding St James's Square or Grosvenor Square to the west (fig.3.1). Unlike these new urban developments, Whitehall's pattern of development had been dictated by a rich and complex history.

The transformation of Whitehall into a residential area had begun in 1698, when a substantial part of Whitehall Palace had been destroyed by fire. Rather than rebuilding the ruined palace, William III had decided to move his court to St James's, which was to remain the principal royal residence throughout the eighteenth century. Meanwhile, the site of Whitehall Palace, covering an area of twenty-three acres, remained under the control of the Crown and, over the ensuing years, leases were granted in a piecemeal fashion, both on parts of the building which had survived the

[433] J. Gwynn, *London and Westminster Improved* (London, 1766), p.89.

fire as well as parcels of land amidst the ruins. As will be seen, the eighteenth-century layout of the site essentially followed the ground plan of the former palace. For the purposes of this study, it is useful to identify three distinct areas: the Privy Garden, located between the roadway and the river on the east side of the Palace site; Scotland Yard, the more congested area situated to the north of the Privy Garden; and the Cockpit area, located between the Royal Horseguards building and Downing Street on the west side of the roadway (fig.3.2).[434]

To date, eighteenth-century Whitehall has rarely been considered as either an elite neighbourhood or as a distinct built environment. Instead, historians have tended to focus on the individual building projects of prominent aristocrats, such as John Vanbrugh's so-called 'goose-pie' house, or the Earl of Pembroke's Palladian villa overlooking the Thames. Constructed in 1701, the former was one of the first houses to be erected amidst the ruins of Whitehall Palace. Despite its relatively small scale, it was built in a grandiose Baroque style, causing it to be mocked by many of Vanbrugh's contemporaries.[435] Meanwhile, Pembroke House (1717-24), built according to the designs of Colen Campbell for Henry Herbert, 9th Earl of Pembroke, is credited as being one of England's earliest neo-Palladian villas.[436] Whilst these individual projects provide enlightening architectural case studies, they shed little light on the broader context of Whitehall as an elite neighbourhood. Furthermore, such case studies tell us only about men. Contrary to commonly held beliefs about male

[434] At this point in its course, the Thames runs briefly from south to north, not west to east as one might assume.

[435] The house was notoriously likened to a 'goose-pie by Jonathan Swift in his poem, 'V—'s House Built from the Ruins of Whitehall that was Burnt', 1703. See V. Hart, *Sir John Vanbrugh: Storyteller in Stone* (New York & London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp.213-17.

[436] S. Brindle, 'Pembroke House, Whitehall', *The Georgian Group Journal*, 8 (1998), pp.88-113.

dominance in property ownership, many of Whitehall's residents were in fact women, several of whom retained tenure of their properties for exceptionally long periods of time. Prominent female residents of the neighbourhood included: Jane Bentinck, dowager Countess of Portland (1672-1751), who resided in the Privy Garden between 1718 and 1751; Charlotte Boscawen, Viscountess Falmouth (*c.*1680-1754), who occupied a house near the Cockpit between 1716 and 1743; and the latter's sister, Elizabeth Dunch (*c.*1685-1761), who resided in Scotland Yard between 1708 and 1761. All these women played active roles in the community and took pride in their houses, expending large sums on extensions, maintenance, and embellishment, yet their names are largely absent from scholarly investigation.

The surviving rate books relating to the parish of St Margaret, Westminster, together with research conducted by the *Survey of London*, show the proportion of Whitehall's single female residents (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). For example, out of the thirteen ratepayers listed for the Privy Garden in 1719, five were women, whilst, in 1736, six out of nineteen ratepayers were female. Not surprisingly, most of these women were widows, although the data also includes spinsters and estranged wives. Some of the widows had inherited these properties on the death of their husbands, including Mary, Duchess of Montagu, whose husband died in 1749, and Charlotte Byng, Lady Torrington, who was widowed in 1747 (Table 3.1). In addition, there were also notable married women who lived in the neighbourhood, not revealed by the data, including Sarah Lennox, Duchess of Richmond (1705-51) and Margaret Bentinck, 2nd Duchess of Portland (1715-85). No rate books have yet come to light relating to the Scotland Yard area, unfortunately, which fell under the parish of St Martin in the Fields, Charing Cross. Consequently, the second table is based on evidence compiled by the *Survey of London* (volume 16) relating to leaseholds listed in the Treasury

books, as well as information contained in contemporary newspaper reports (Table 3.2). This too reveals a strong presence of widows, but a far lower proportion of members of the nobility, indicating that Scotland Yard was lower in status than the Privy Garden residences.

Table 3.1:

Women as Ratepayers - Privy Gardens and Cockpit Lodgings 1718-51. Information compiled from Westminster Rate Books, Parish of St Margaret, Westminster: Poor Relief: E337-E371 (1722 & 1727 missing).

Name	Marital Status	Residence	Years in residence
Lady Lowther (in 1726, 1734 listed as Mrs Lowther or Mrs Jane Lowther)	Unmarried	Privy Garden	1718 to 1724 1726 to 1743
Frances, Countess of Marr	Married (husband in exile)	Privy Garden	1718, 1719, 1724
Countess of Portland	Widow	Privy Garden	1718 to 1751 (listed every recorded year)
Widow Hemmings	Widow	Privy Garden	1718 to 1730
Mrs Frances		Tilt Yard	1718 to 1724
Lady Holderness	Widow	Privy Garden	1719 to 1723
Marchioness Annandale	Widow	Privy Garden	1723 to 1726
Lady Delaware	Widow		1725 to 1737
Lady Davenport		Privy Garden	1726
Duchess of Portland Elizabeth Bentinck[437]	Widow	Portland House Privy Garden	1726, 1731, 1733
Mme Colledge	Unmarried	Cockpit	1728, 1729, 1732, 1733
Mme Crowley	Widow	Privy Garden	1730 to 1746
Duchess of Leeds	Widow	Whitehall Yard	1730 to 1738
Mrs Mackenzie		Privy Garden	1734 to 1737
Viscountess Falmouth	Widow	Cockpit	1739[438] to 1743
Lady Lovelace	Widow	Privy Garden	1738
Mrs Dickerson		Cockpit	1738
Lady Hanbury[439]	Separated	Privy Garden	1739, 1740, 1741, 1742, 1743
Lady Townsend	Separated	Privy Garden	1746-1788
Duchess of Montagu	Widow	Privy Garden	1751
Lady Torrington	Widow	Privy Garden	1751-56

[437] In 1724, 1725 and 1727-29, the house appears to have been leased to Lord Lynn. In 1734, it was inherited by William, 2nd Duke of Portland.

[438] Lord Viscount Falmouth's name continues to appear in the rate books until 1739 (this must be an error because Viscountess Falmouth - listed from 1740 - inherited the house on his death in 1734).

[439] Lady Frances Hanbury Williams, estranged wife of Charles Hanbury Williams.

Table 3.2:

Women leaseholders in Scotland Yard, 1700-1750, compiled from *Survey of London: Volume 16, St Martin-in-The-Fields I: Charing Cross*, ed. G H Gater and E P Wheeler (London, 1935).

Name	**Marital Status**	**Exact Location of residence (if known)**	**Years in residence**
Arabella Godfrey	Widow	Rooms between Jewel Office and Privy Seal and Signet office	1698-1730
Lady Vanbrugh	Widow	Vanbrugh House	1726-76
Elizabeth Dunch (née Godfrey)	Widow	Plot overlooking river	1719-61
Mrs Odiam[440]	Widow		Resident on death in 1739
Mary Meadows[441]	Unmarried		Resident on death in 1743
Mrs Whitehead[442]	Unknown		Resident on death in 1743
Mrs Kennedy[443]	Widow		Resident on death in 1755
Ann Scarburgh	Unmarried	Greencloth Yard	1727 (date of lease)
Mrs Kingdon	Widow	Middle Scotland Yard	1701 (date of lease)
Jane Kingdon Daughter of above	Unmarried	Middle Scotland Yard	1742-43
Jane Stockdale	Unknown	Lodgings of Mr Chace	1721-1735
Miss Kynaston[444]	Unknown		Resident on death in 1740

[440] Described as 'Mother of Wentworth Odiam Esq, Serjeant at Arms', *London Daily Post*, 28 December 1739.

[441] Mary Meadows was first Maid of Honour to Queen Caroline. See *General Evening Post*, 2-5 April 1743.

[442] Mrs Whitehead was Chamber-keeper to his Majesty's Yeomen of the Guards. *Daily Gazetteer*, 20 October, 1743.

[443] *Read's Weekly Journal Or British Gazetteer*, 29 November 1755.

[444] Described as 'a relation of the Tory MP, Corbet Kynaston': *London Evening Post*, 11-13 November 1740.

The primary aim of this chapter is to assess the Whitehall district from the perspective of its female inhabitants. However, to provide essential context, this study necessarily engages with some issues relevant to *all* Whitehall's residents. For example, it addresses the significance of the riverside location, the impact of urban improvement and the requirement to adapt properties to the existing ruins of the former palace. By assessing the experiences of female residents in relation to their male counterparts, it explores how such issues were inflected by gender, thereby offering a more nuanced examination of property ownership in this unique area of eighteenth-century London. This chapter also engages with concerns specifically about women, especially in relation to their role in a familial context. It focuses primarily on two family networks which feature prominently in Whitehall's history. The first is the family of Arabella Godfrey (née Churchill) (1648-1730), who was a long-term resident of Scotland Yard, and whose two daughters, Charlotte Boscawen (Viscountess Falmouth) and Elizabeth Dunch, spent most of their adult lives living in Whitehall (figs 3.3 and 3.4). The second is the Bentinck family, a strong presence in the Privy Garden in the early eighteenth century, who at one time occupied three neighbouring properties (fig.3.5). Of particular value to the present study has been the prolific correspondence of Jane Bentinck (née Temple]) dowager Countess of Portland (fig.3.6). Over 200 of the letters she wrote to her eldest son, Count William Bentinck, in the Hague have survived in the British Library, ranging in date from 1730 to 1751, the year of her death. These letters provide invaluable insight into the day-to-day events of the neighbourhood which the Countess recorded in colourful detail.

Part 1 of this chapter explores issues relating to the site's royal status. It starts with a brief overview of the architectural history of Whitehall Palace from its Tudor origins to its partial destruction by fire in 1698. This provides essential background to

the rich historical associations of the site, also shedding light on its complex layout. It then shows how Whitehall remained under crown control and continued to provide a place of residence for male and female courtiers after the fire, despite having lost its function as a royal palace. Part 2 focuses on various practical issues associated with the site's layout and location. Starting with the advantages of its riverside situation, it then examines some of the challenges associated with the area, including building on a partially ruined site, disputes over boundaries and the impact of urban improvement. Finally, Part 3 examines the area's importance as a hub for kinship by focusing on the two family groups identified above. It draws extensively on archival material to consider the roles of women in upholding family relations and in managing royal and political connections.

Part 1. The Royal Connection

History of the Site

Largely built during the reign of Henry VIII in 1534, the Tudor palace of Whitehall extended over both sides of the major roadway between Westminster and the Strand. The future layout of the palace was essentially established in this period as can be seen by comparing Ralph Agas's bird's eye view of the area, as it appeared around 1561, with the plan showing the palace in 1670, engraved by George Vertue in 1747 (figs 3.7 and 3.8). To the east of the roadway was the Privy Garden, various ceremonial buildings, including the great hall, banqueting house and chapel, and the area known as Scotland Yard which chiefly accommodated the royal servants. Straddling the roadway were two stone gates: one at the Westminster entrance to the site; another (later known as the Holbein Gate) linking the Privy Garden lodgings with an extensive leisure

complex to the west. This comprised four tennis courts, a tiltyard for jousting and an octagonal cockpit overlooking the royal park of St James's, the hunting ground of Henry VIII.[445]

Despite its sprawling ground plan, the architectural form of the sixteenth-century palace had been given visual coherence by its external decoration. A chequer pattern of black and white chalk and flints featured on the Holbein Gate, the Cockpit and the battlements of the Chapel.[446] However, over the course of its 160-year history, the palace underwent a series of piecemeal alterations which were to have a detrimental effect on the stylistic unity of the complex. The most significant addition to the palace occurred in 1619, when Inigo Jones rebuilt the Banqueting House for James I in a self-consciously classical style which bore little relation to the existing Tudor buildings (fig.3.9). In the 1630s, Charles I took up his father's project with even greater zeal, commissioning Jones and his assistant, John Webb, to produce a series of drawings for the rebuilding and expansion of the palace along the lines of the existing Banqueting House. However, the outbreak of the civil war put an abrupt end to Charles's schemes, and, in an ironic turn of events, the Banqueting House's elegant classical façade was to form the backdrop to the Stuart King's execution on 30 January 1649. At the time of the Restoration, the architectural incoherence of the seventeenth-century palace thus compared unfavourably with the great European palaces such as the Louvre in Paris and the Escorial near Madrid. In 1665, the Frenchman, Samuel Sorbière, described Whitehall as 'ill Built and nothing but a heap of houses erected at divers times, and of different Models, which they made Contiguous in the best Manner

[445] St James's Palace, located on the northern side of the park, was originally intended as the home of the Prince of Wales. See S. Thurley, *The Whitehall Palace Plan of 1670* (London: London Topographical Society, 1998), p.2.

[446] Thurley, *Whitehall Palace Plan*, p.2.

they could for the Residence of the Court'.[447] Sorbière's scathing remarks are borne out by Hendrick Danckert's *View of Whitehall Palace from St James's Park*, dated 1674-75, showing the crowded and eclectic character of the palace's architecture (fig.3.10).

In 1669, Christopher Wren was appointed Royal Surveyor, making him officially responsible for the palace buildings, and it was in this capacity that he commissioned the detailed *Survey and Ground Plot* of 1670 (that copied and published by George Vertue, fig.3.8). Rather than an ordered succession of state apartments intended for the day-to-day rituals of the monarch, the plan shows an undisciplined arrangement of buildings, several of which were dedicated to accommodating the King's extensive household. According to Simon Thurley, over 1500 rooms in the palace were set aside for lodgings, allocated either by right (including those awarded as part of remuneration) or by the King's personal favour.[448] Once in possession of a lodging, its occupant was entitled to remain there for as long as they held office, but they were themselves responsible for any repairs or improvements made. The Surveyor of Works struggled to maintain control over unauthorised building projects and boundary disputes between lodgings became a common problem. The site of Whitehall Palace at this date has consequently been described as 'a chaotic amalgam of building with an underlying matrix of overlapping property rights'.[449] As will be seen, this complex situation is crucial to understanding the site's transition from a royal palace to a residential neighbourhood in the early eighteenth century.

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[447] S. Sorbière, *A Journey to England* (London, 1709), p.16.

[448] Thurley notes that the plan shows only the ground floor of the palace which represented about two-thirds of the space available, Thurley, *Whitehall Palace Plan*, p.20.

[449] Thurley, *Whitehall Palace Plan*, p.6.

Not surprisingly, the plan of 1670 shows that a significant proportion of the palace lodgings were granted to women, including queens, royal mistresses, female courtiers and other members of the royal household. Charles II's consort, Catherine of Braganza, had her own modernised suite of rooms in the Privy Gallery. She furnished these chambers with various personal possessions brought over from her former home in Portugal, including cane chairs, lacquer cabinets and porcelain.[450] The royal mistresses of both Charles II and the Duke of York were also granted their own suite of apartments, as were various female courtiers, and the wives of senior male courtiers.[451] Louise de Kerouaille (1649-1734), the French mistress of Charles II, occupied apartments comprising forty rooms at the south-west end of the Privy Garden. She spared no expense in rebuilding and embellishing her chambers, prompting John Evelyn to describe them as 'luxuriously furnished & with ten times the richnesse & glory beyond the Queenes'.[452] Meanwhile, Arabella Churchill, the mistress of James, Duke of York (fig.3.3), had a generously proportioned lodging extending over two floors in Middle Scotland Yard, whilst Barbara Howard, Countess of Suffolk (1622-80) and groom of the stool to Catherine of Braganza, had her own set of apartments near the Stone Gallery.[453]

During the final decades of the seventeenth century, Wren made various improvements to the palace, including the construction of a new privy gallery and Catholic chapel for James II, and a new riverside apartment, originally intended for

[450] E. Corp, 'Catherine of Braganza', Campbell Orr, *Queenship in Britain*, p.64.

[451] For example, the Countess of Falmouth, widow of Charles Berkeley Keeper of the Privy Purse (d.1679), retained lodgings at Whitehall until her death in 1679. See Thurley, *Whitehall Palace Plan*, p.39.

[452] Bray, *Diary of John Evelyn*, vol.2, p.412: 10 September 1675.

[453] Thurley, *Whitehall Palace Plan*, p.36 and p.53. Barbara Howard's apartments underwent continual improvement during the reign of Charles II.

James's consort, Mary of Modena. However, following the King's flight into exile in 1688, the project was completed for his daughter, Mary II, around 1693. The new Protestant Queen held a particular interest in continental garden design, and it was under her patronage that Wren built the extensive garden terrace projecting from her apartments into the river, as represented in a drawing by Nicholas Hawksmoor (fig.3.11).[454] Wren's additions can be seen in Leonard Knyff's *Bird's eye view of Whitehall Palace*, executed *c.*1694-98 (fig.3.12). However, Wren's ongoing plans to transform the royal palace into a harmonised architectural complex were dramatically interrupted by the fire of 1698. From this moment onwards, Whitehall Palace ceased to function as the principal royal residence, and King William moved his court to the nearby St James's Palace located on the north side of St James's Park.

For the purposes of the current study, it is useful to assess the full extent of the damage caused by the conflagration of 1698. Not surprisingly, contemporary accounts tend to emphasise devastating destruction, but, on close reading, they also reveal that significant parts of the palace escaped the flames. One of these accounts, transcribed in volume X of the *Harleian Miscellany* states that the fire destroyed 'all that stood in its way, from the Privy-Stairs to the Banqueting-House, and from Privy-Garden to Scotland-Yard all on that side, except the earl of Portland's house and the Banqueting-House, which were preserved though much damnified and shattered.'[455] The palace buildings destroyed by the fire therefore included both Wren's recent additions (the Privy Garden range and the Queen's apartments), and nearly all the buildings lying

[454] Mary II is credited with bringing continental influences to bear in her patronage, notably her Dutch taste in garden design, botany and architecture. C. Campbell Orr, 'Introduction', Campbell Orr, *Queenship in Britain,* p.12.

[455] W. Oldys and J. Malham, eds, *Harleian Miscellany*, Volume X, (London, 1810): 'Account of a Fire at Whitehall', pp.359-60.

between the Banqueting House and the river. However, all the buildings to the west of the roadway and almost the entire area of Scotland Yard to the north-east escaped the flames.[456]

Transition from royal palace to residential site

John Rocque's map of 1746 reveals that the layout of Whitehall at this date was closely related to that of the former palace (fig.3.1). The south-east of the site was still described as the Privy Garden, containing the most desirable plots overlooking the Thames. Separating this area from Scotland Yard to the north was Whitehall Court (the courtyard labelled 'Whitehall' on Rocque's map), which provided public access from the roadway to Whitehall Stairs, the principal embarkation point on the river. Beyond this, the area known as Scotland Yard was comprised of three irregularly shaped courtyards extending between the roadway and the river to the north east. Opposite Scotland Yard, on the west side of the roadway, can be found the Admiralty buildings and Royal Horseguards, beyond which were located the Cockpit buildings, bordering on Downing Street to the south and overlooking the Parade ground and St James's Park to the west. This part of the site accommodated both government offices and domestic apartments, so its residents often had less control over the design and layout of their properties. Rocque's map also shows how the Holbein Gate, which originally linked the two sides of the palace, jutted out into the centre of the roadway.

[456] This evidence is corroborated by the *Survey of London*: One month after the fire, some of the buildings on the 'Cockpit' side of the palace were almost immediately repurposed to accommodate the various government offices which had been destroyed: *SoL*, vol.14, p.29. The fire 'penetrated some distance north of the eastern half of Whitehall Court, but Scotland Yard as a whole suffered little.' *SoL*, vol.16, p.163.

Even once the royal court had moved to St James's, successive monarchs liked to exert control over the Whitehall site. Immediately after the fire of 1698, King William had commissioned Christopher Wren to create a sumptuous design for rebuilding the palace complex, focusing on the Banqueting House (fig.3.13).[457] This was never realised owing to a lack of funds and Wren was instead given the far more modest task of converting the Banqueting House into a chapel.[458] Nonetheless, whilst previous studies have suggested that plans to rebuild the palace were entirely abandoned by the time Queen Anne acceded to the throne in 1702, the evidence in fact shows that it remained a possibility throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. Consequently, every lease issued by the Treasury on behalf of the King included a clause of resumption to cover this contingency. For example, the lease issued to the Countess of Portland in 1719 stated that His Majesty had the power to 'reassume the premises on the contingency of rebuilding the palace of Whitehall without any consideration whatsoever to be made thereupon to the lessee'.[459] Moreover, during the early part of her reign, Queen Anne continued to use her apartments in the Cockpit as a royal residence. These had originally been granted to her by her uncle, Charles II, in 1684 and, after becoming Queen in 1702, she made use of these rooms 'for the entertainment of Foreign Ambassadors'.[460]

To some extent, the allocation of lodgings at Whitehall continued as it had done before the fire, with the monarch granting leases to royal favourites and loyal servants for a fixed number of years. William Bentinck, Earl of Portland – a favourite

[457] See A. Geraghty, 'Wren and the English Baroque', in Tabitha Barker, ed. *British Baroque: Power and Illusion* (London: Tate Publishing, 2020), pp.80-83.

[458] Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary*, p.1089.

[459] TNA, T.54/25, p.206: 2 June 1719.

[460] *English Post*, 8-10 June 1702.

of William III – retained possession of his house in the Privy Garden, one of the few buildings there to have survived the flames.[461] Surviving areas of the palace were also used as 'overflow' apartments for courtiers who could not be accommodated at St James's. For example, Isabella Wentworth, a retired courtier, who had served as lady of the bedchamber to Mary of Modena, was granted lodgings in the Cockpit in 1698 when her rooms at St James's Palace were required for Anne's son, the Duke of Gloucester.[462] The same year, Arabella Godfrey (née Churchill, the former mistress of James II), returned to live in Scotland Yard when her husband, Colonel Charles Godfrey, was appointed Master of the Jewel Office (figs 3.2 and 3.3).[463] Meanwhile, the couple's two daughters, Charlotte and Elizabeth Godfrey, gained positions at court as maids of honour to Princess Anne. Although both sisters resigned from royal service on their marriages, they later returned to live in Whitehall as married women. Elizabeth came to occupy a house at the southern end of Scotland Yard in 1708 when her husband, Edmund Dunch, was appointed Master of the Household (fig.3.14). Meanwhile, Charlotte took up residence in a large property near the Cockpit in 1716, when her spouse, Hugh Boscawen, was appointed Comptroller of the Household to George I. Another of Queen Anne's courtiers who became a long-term resident of Whitehall was Jane Kingdon who served the Queen as a maid of honour from 1700 to

[461] In 1725, Peter Wentworth recalled that Lord Portland had ordered the firemen, 'to play continualy water upon his lodgings wch was preserved tho' the rest [of the palace] was burn't down'. BL Add MS 22227, f.50: Peter Wentworth to Lord Strafford, 14 December 1725.

[462] The case of Isabella Wentworth will be discussed in chapter 5.

[463] In 1704, Charles Godfrey was also awarded the position of Clerk of the Green Cloth. John Beattie has noted that the board of the green cloth, the governing committee of the household below stairs, was monopolized by members of the Marlborough connection in the early eighteenth century owing to the Duke of Marlborough's eagerness to gain offices for his relations. See J. Beattie, *The English Court in the Reign of George I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p.158.

1714. Following the Queen's death, she retired with a court pension to live with her widowed mother and unmarried sisters in a house in Middle Scotland Yard.[464]

The function of Whitehall changed little after George I came to the throne.[465] In 1718, Jane Bentinck, dowager Countess of Portland, who had recently been appointed governess to the King's three eldest granddaughters, took up residence in the Privy Garden, next door to the house formerly owned by her husband (figs 3.2 and 3.6).[466] Her boldness in petitioning the King prompted Lady Henrietta Godolphin to applaud her assertiveness; 'my Lady Portland has said she will have Lady Albermall's Lodgings, so she has them[…] I have realy thought this great while that no way but a very insolent one dos any thing in the world.'[467] It seems that the Countess enjoyed particular favour with George I since, a year later, she was also granted a fifty year lease on the garden terrace, that originally designed by Christopher Wren for Mary II, located between her plot and the river (figs 3.11 and 3.25).[468] This parterre spanned 269 feet in length and projected about seventy feet beyond the shoreline, thereby providing a valuable addition to her plot. Moreover, in 1724, she extended her

[464] This house had been occupied by her mother since 1701. See *SoL*, vol.16, p.52; F. Harris, '"The Honourable Sisterhood": Queen Anne's Maids of Honour', *British Library Journal*, 19 (1993), p.185. In 1742, Jane Kingdon obtained a further lease of fifty years for the property although she parted with her interest the following year to a certain Elizabeth Lucas. See *SoL*, vol.16, p.52.

[465] During George I's reign, many houses in Whitehall were held by court officers or leased from the Crown 'on very favourable terms'. Beattie, *English Court in the Reign of George I*, p.186.

[466] Following the rift between George I and the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1717, George I asserted his right to manage his grandchildren's education.

[467] BL Evelyn Papers, Add MS 78469, f.22: Lady Henrietta Godolphin to Lady Evelyn, 19 June 1718. Lady Albemarle had inherited the lodgings from her husband, Arnold van Keppel, the Earl of Albemarle, who had died in May of that year.

[468] TNA T.54/25, p.206: 2 June 1719.

lodgings to the north to create a second dwelling which she subsequently moved into, enabling her to sublet the original rooms (fig.3.2).[469]

For those employed in the monarch's service, residence in Whitehall provided an ideal base from which to carry out royal duties. During George II's reign, a number of Queen Caroline's ladies of the bedchamber lived here. Elizabeth Sackville, Duchess of Dorset (1689-1768), mistress of the robes, resided in a sumptuous set of apartments near the Cockpit, on the site of the old Tudor tennis court. Caroline's ladies also included Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1707-69) and Sarah Lennox, Duchess of Richmond, who both occupied grand residences in the Privy Garden. As married female courtiers, these women frequently used their homes to entertain members of the royal family. In May 1736, for example, the Duke and Duchess of Richmond held 'a very grand entertainment in the Privy Garden […] in Honour of the Royal Nuptials of Prince Frederick and Augusta Saxe-Gotha-Altenberg', and, the following November, the Earl and Countess of Pembroke hosted another 'grand Entertainment' in honour of 'his Majesty's birthday'.[470] Such examples show the extent to which members of the royal family often relied on the town houses of courtiers to host large-scale social events in their honour, supplementing the activities of the court.[471]

A property in Whitehall also enabled those who had retired from royal service to maintain a relationship with the royal family. Mary, Duchess of Montagu, who had served as lady of the bedchamber to Queen Caroline when she was Princess of Wales,

[469]The Surveyor's report of February 1724, relating to this petition, claimed that the carcass of the new structure measured '60 feet in front, 26 feet in depth'. It estimated that the building had already cost £700 and would require 'a further considerable sum to finish'. TNA, T.54/29, p.200: 6 February 1724.

[470] *Daily Gazetteer*, 4 May 1736 (the royal wedding had taken place on 27 April 1736); *Daily Gazetteer*, 1 November 1736.

[471] See Schlarman, 'Social Geography', p.24.

moved to the Privy Garden with her husband in 1733. Montagu House, their elegant riverside mansion, provided a handsome venue for elite entertaining and, in 1736, they welcomed Queen Caroline and the royal princesses to view their picture collection.[472] Meanwhile, Jane, Countess of Portland continued to live in Whitehall after her retirement as governess in 1727, maintaining a close relationship with her former charges, the Princesses Amelia and Caroline.[473] The princesses were frequent visitors to her home, as was the case in January 1740 when they came to inspect the frozen Thames from her windows.[474] It seems that Jane particularly valued her relationship with Princess Amelia, whom she claimed was 'always employ'd in some marks of goodness to me & my family'.[475] Their close bond persisted until the Countess's final illness in 1754, when the newspaper reported: 'Her royal highness the Princess Amelia, was this morning to visit the Countess of Portland who continues dangerously ill. Her Ladyship was Governess to the Princesses and […] they retain the most tenderest Affection for her Goodness.'[476]

[472] *Daily Gazetteer*, 26 August 1736.

[473] After the death of George I in June 1727, Queen Caroline relieved the Countess of Portland from her position as governess but granted her 'a handsome pension' for 'the great care and Prudence' she had always taken in the education of the princesses. *Daily Post*, 28 September 1727.

[474] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.87: Jane Bentinck, to William Bentinck, 29 January 1740.

[475] This remark was prompted by Princess Amelia's assistance in obtaining the post of King's Chaplain for the Countess's grandson, John Egerton in June 1750. BL Egerton MS 216, f.199, Jane Bentinck to William Bentinck, 23 March 1749/50.

[476] *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer*, 26-28 February 1751.

Part 2: The River, the Ruins and the Bridge

Riverside location

Aside from its royal status, perhaps the greatest appeal of the Whitehall area was its riverside location. It is hard to overestimate the importance of the Thames to eighteenth-century Londoners. As the main artery running through London, it provided an efficient and enjoyable form of transport in comparison to the discomforts of travelling by road. Describing his journey from the Exchange in the City to Whitehall pier in 1710, the travel writer, Zacharias Von Uffenbach, enthused; 'it is prodigiously convenient that, because London is for the most part built along the river, one can go almost anywhere by water; this is exceedingly pleasant, not only because one is rowed past the town, but because one travels swiftly.'[477] The Thames also held a symbolic significance as a route for trade and prosperity, providing a link with distant corners of the world. All manner of cargo was transported along the river to Whitehall Stairs including, in September 1734, 'a beautiful young leopard, lately arriv'd from Barbadoes', delivered to the Duke of Richmond in the Privy Garden.[478]

Visitors to London were often struck by the beauty of the river. The Swiss tourist, César De Saussure, admired the array of 'barges or galleys, painted, carved and gilt', concluding: 'Nothing is more charming and attractive than the Thames on a fine summer evening'.[479] During the 1740s, the War of the Austrian Succession prevented English aristocrats from visiting Venice, contributing to an increased demand for

[477] Z. Von Uffenbach, *London in 1710*, eds, W. Quarrell and M. Mare (London, 1934), pp.15-16.

[478] *Grub Street Journal*, 12 September 1734.

[479] C. de Saussure, *A foreign view of England in the Reigns of George I and George II* (London: John Murray, 1902), pp.94-96.

pictorial representations of the Thames.[480] Whitehall was arguably one of the best locations from which to appreciate the river vista since it was situated just south of the point where the Thames changes course, curving towards the east. In Canaletto's luminous panorama, painted from the elevated position of Richmond House, rowing boats and decorative barges are distributed across the broad expanse of the water whilst, in the distance, the majestic silhouette of St Paul's and the white spires of the city punctuate the horizon (fig.3.15). The elegantly dressed men and women who promenade along the terrace in the foreground are shown appreciating the picturesque riverscape before them. In turn, the stage-like space of the terrace offers these leisured aristocrats the chance to be observed by passengers on the numerous craft travelling on the water.[481]

When occasion demanded, the river provided a theatrical setting for pageantry and display. In June 1729, the Duke and Duchess of Richmond staged a magnificent spectacle to celebrate their daughter Caroline's birthday, when 'two barges were placed on the River Thames before his Grace's House [in the Privy Garden] from which were played a great Number of fine fireworks'.[482] In the same year, Mary Delany described how she spent an entire night on the river, boarding a barge at Whitehall Stairs at five o'clock in the afternoon and returning to the same point at five o'clock the following morning: 'We row'd up the River as far as Richmond and was entertain'd all the time with very good musick in another Barge.'[483] Four years later

[480] R. Kingzett, 'A Catalogue of the Works of Samuel Scott', *Volume of the Walpole Society*, 48 (1980-82), p.3.

[481] Schlarman has suggested that the intent of the urban female pedestrian was as much to observe as to be observed in the social spaces of the metropolis; Schlarman, 'Social Geography', p.21.

[482] *Daily Gazeteer*, 29 March 1737.

[483] Llanover, *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville*, vol.1, p.70: Mary Pendarves to Anne Granville, 14 July 1722.

saw the launch of Prince Frederick's sumptuous golden barge, designed by William Kent (fig.2.36). It sailed from Hungerford Market to Whitehall Stairs, 'where several Persons of Distinction took water in her and went up River'.[484] Members of the royal family had their own private access point to the river through a passage leading from the Privy Garden to the river terrace owned by the Countess of Portland. In 1724, the Countess was granted permission to cover the walkway 'to prevent the Rains falling thereon'.[485] It is evident from contemporary newspaper reports that the royal family made frequent use of this privilege. In June 1729, for example, the King walked from the Duke of Richmond's house in the Privy-Garden to 'the Countess of Portland's, where he took water […] and went up the river to Wandsworth'. Later that same day, he returned to the Countess's landing stage where his sedan chair was waiting to carry him to the Opera House in the Haymarket.[486]

De Sassure's account of the River Thames draws attention to 'the pretty and picturesque mansions overlooking the river'.[487] This river frontage was captured by Samuel Scott, in the view he executed for the Duke of Montagu in 1749 (fig.3.16). In contrast to Canaletto's riverscape, which surveys the Thames from the vantage point of Richmond House, Scott's watercolour adopts the perspective of a passenger on the water, looking back towards the shoreline. Centring on the Duke's newly built, seven-bay villa, the sunlit panorama shows the sequence of riverside residences, including the two, adjoining red-brick houses belonging to the Countess of Portland, and her projecting tree-lined garden terrace. Along the water's edge can be seen part of the old

[484] *London Evening Post*, 1-4 April 1732.

[485] TNA, T.54/29, p.202: 26 February 1724.

[486] *Flying Post or The Weekly Medley*, 7 June 1729.

[487] De Saussure, *Foreign view of England,* p.66.

palace's outer wall with its circular bastions, drawing attention to the historical context of the site.[488]

Nathaniel and Samuel Buck also recorded this stretch of the Thames in *A Long View of London and Westminster* showing Whitehall from the perspective of the south bank, *c.*1746 (fig.3.17). Unlike Scott, the Buck brothers prioritised topographical accuracy, rather than encouraging the eye to focus on specific buildings.[489] The extensive riverside facades of these properties, many incorporating gazebos, indicate that their occupants wished to make the most of the river outlook. Several letters written by Jane, Countess of Portland, to her son, William Bentinck, comment on the view before her windows, suggesting that her writing desk was strategically positioned to take in the vista. In the winter of 1740, for example, she witnessed an altogether altered scene when the Thames froze over, with the result that tradesmen set up market stalls on its petrified surface. Writing from the relative comfort of her riverside room, Jane delivered her own social commentary:

> these last two days has vastly encreast the Ice in ye River before my windows; there are multitude of people, upon it, & [I] wonder how they can support the cold there with this wind; but the booths built on it furnish them plentifully with gin […] tis great pity yt they are got again into having it in plenty.[490]

Of course, the Countess enjoyed an exceptionally privileged position in relation to the river outlook on account of her garden terrace, clearly seen on the right-hand side of Scott's river view (fig.3.16). A further surviving drawing by Scott (probably dating

[488] S. O'Connell, *London 1753* (London, 2003), p.127.

[489] *Ibid.*, p.121.

[490] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.80: Jane Bentinck (hereafter JB) to William Bentinck (hereafter WB), 15 January 1740.

from the late 1740s) adopts a viewpoint from the outermost point of the terrace looking towards Westminster Bridge (fig.3.18). Jane took great pride in her terrace garden, planting various trees, likely to have been imported from her son's estate in the Hague.[491] Having originally belonged to Queen Mary, the parterre was a highly visible symbol of her royal connections whilst the covered walkway drew attention to her ongoing relationship with the royal family.

Adapting to the Ruins

Whilst there was considerable prestige attached to acquiring a leasehold property in Whitehall, and substantial advantages in the location, there were also difficulties involved in inhabiting this royal territory. This section considers how Whitehall's female residents experienced and negotiated these challenges, particularly in relation to the imprecise delineation of plots. Elizabeth Dunch's residence, located at the southern end of Scotland Yard, epitomised the piecemeal nature of construction, typical of the neighbourhood, which could lead to confusion over property boundaries. The original house, built by her husband around 1708, occupied the site of the Queen's Bakehouse (as indicated on the plan of 1670) and extended eastwards as far as the river (figs 3.2 and 3.8). Its river frontage appears to have incorporated the southern half of the Small Beer Buttery which had partially survived the fire, as can be seen by comparing Knyff's representation of the building with the Bucks's river view of 1746 (figs 3.12 and 3.17). Around 1709, various new buildings were erected by Edmund Dunch, who also created a large garden from the adjoining waste ground (fig.3.19).

[491] The garden at Zorgvliet in the Hague was created by the 1st Earl of Portland, a keen amateur botanist. See, for example, BL Egerton MS 1715, f.5: JB to WB, 20 January 1730 in which the Countess asks her son to send the bill for the trees.

Once Elizabeth became a widow in 1719, she continued to improve the property and, in 1722, she was granted a new lease which included an additional house 'built by Patrick Lamb within the […] Palace of Whitehall called the Pastry Yard'.[492] Some time later, she added a wing to the north to extend her river view, evident in comparison of the ground plan of her house in 1718 with that of 1754 (figs 3.19 and 3.20).[493] On assessing the site in 1754, with a view to granting a new lease, the Surveyor General noted that, 'in fencing in her garden & making additions to her house', Elizabeth had encroached on 'the vacant ground of the palace', whilst, in other places, she had not taken all the ground to which she was entitled. Judging that these alterations had merely made the house 'more commodious […] without any detriment to the palace', the Surveyor recommended that a new lease should be granted for the entire premises without any penalty being issued to the leaseholder.[494] Elizabeth was reputed to be a favourite of George II, which may explain why her encroachment was treated with leniency (fig.3.14). Her favoured position with the King was also noted by her aunt, the Duchess of Marlborough, who observed that her niece was able to drive a carriage through St James's Park, a 'small privilege' which she herself had been denied.[495]

Elizabeth's elder sister, Charlotte, Viscountess Falmouth, became the named leaseholder of a large property in the Cockpit area of Whitehall after her husband died in 1734. This property occupied an enviable position adjoining the Holbein gate to the

[492] TNA PROB 3/29/134: Inventory of all Goods […] of Arrabella Godfrey…, 2 July 1730, includes description of grant, awarded to Elizabeth Dunch, dated 10 October 1722.

[493] TNA T.55/9, p.115: 19 February 1754.

[494] *Ibid.*

[495] *Private Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough* (London, 1838), vol.2, p.443. See reference to Elizabeth Dunch in chapter 1. Her portrait (most likely that shown in fig.3.14) was displayed at Marlborough House.

east, whilst its western front overlooked St James's Park (figs 3.2 and 3.21). The Holbein Gate had been part of the original Tudor palace, described by John Vanbrugh as 'one of the greatest curiositys there is in London'[496] The value of the Falmouths' property must surely have been enhanced by its association with the historic gateway. The lodgings had been built by the 1st Duke of Ormonde around 1660, and two surviving ground plans, dated 1696 and 1717, show that it changed little in outline between these dates (figs. 3.22 and 3.23).[497] During the 1720s, Falmouth had new-fronted the building on both the park front to the west and that overlooking the Tilt Yard to the north but, by the time his widow came to renew her lease in 1739, the property was in need of costly maintenance. The Surveyor reported that it was 'an old and bad building', requiring 'great repairs to support and keep it up'.[498] Moreover, when Lady Falmouth had come to rent out part of the property in 1737, she was obliged to explain the inadequate provision for servant accommodation; 'the offices and conveniences for servants are small & not proportionable to the rest of the House, but they are as large & convenient as the ground will admit of'.[499] It appears that she took steps to redress this problem, since the report of 1739 claims that she had newly built 'some additional offices and conveniences' to the north which encroached on the Tilt Yard.[500] In this case, the Surveyor was not inclined to be lenient, charging Lady Falmouth an additional rent of forty shillings in acknowledgement of the encroachment.

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[496] Quoted in *SoL*, vol.16, p.19.

[497] TNA E.367/3996: Lease to Hugh Boscawen…, 1717; It seems likely that Ormonde 'largely reconstructed' an existing building on the site. See *SoL*, vol.14, p.58.

[498] TNA T.55/5, p.138, 19 April 1739.

[499] BL Add MS 61441, f.205: Charlotte, Lady Falmouth, to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 2 May 1737.

[500] TNA T.55/5, p.138, 19 April 1739.

Problems and Disputes

In certain cases, the Treasury's inconsistent policy towards leaseholders led to difficulties and even disputes. As an elderly widow, Arabella Godfrey (fig.3.3) came under considerable pressure to vacate her rooms above the Jewel Office when Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London, applied for a lease of her apartment. Although this was granted in June 1727, Gibson was reportedly unable to arrange terms with Mrs Godfrey for her 'voluntary voidance'. When representatives from the Treasury called at the property to carry out a survey, Arabella reportedly turned them away, refusing 'to lett [the apartment] be viewed withinside'. [501] It seems that the Bishop was reluctant to force the elderly courtier out of the apartment. Consequently, he waited until her death in 1730 before taking possession of the rooms.[502]

The most severe problems arose when neighbouring householders complained about each other's encroachments beyond the ground leased to them. In 1737, a highly acrimonious dispute erupted between Jane, Countess of Portland, and the Earl of Pembroke concerning the ownership of Queen Mary's Terrace which extended in front of their two properties. In 1998, Steven Brindle included an account of this dispute as part of his investigation into the history of Pembroke House.[503] However, the present study examines the dispute from Jane's perspective by drawing on both her personal correspondence held by the British Library and various legal documents at the National Archive. Pembroke (known as Lord Herbert until 1733) had acquired his site between the Privy Garden and Queen Mary's terrace in 1717. At this time, the site had included some of the ruins of the Queen's Apartment, Wren's six-bay building of

[501] TNA T.54/30, p.158: Quoted in *SoL*, vol.16, p.174.

[502] *SoL*, vol.16, p.174.

[503] Brindle, 'Pembroke House'.

1688-90.[504] Having secured his lease, Pembroke's first act had been to repair the Wren wall facing the terrace, still standing to ground floor level. He had then set about building a new Palladian villa behind the wall, completed some time before 1724.[505] The position of both Pembroke's house and Jane's two houses in relation to the terrace can be seen in two drawings created in 1737 to accompany the petitions of the parties involved in the dispute (figs 3.24 and 3.25).

Until 1719, the terrace had remained unenclosed crown property, but, in June of that year, Jane applied for, and was granted, a thirty-one-year lease of the entire terrace walk as noted above.[506] Pembroke was profoundly annoyed by his neighbour's acquisition of the terrace, later claiming that he could never have been 'so unreasonable & invidious to the Neighbours as to expose [himself] to ask for the King's particular Garden & only way to the water.'[507] Moreover, Pembroke strongly objected to the fact that the Countess had planted several trees at the northern end of the terrace, which he claimed rendered his property 'dark, damp and unwholesome'.[508] Jane, however, had her own causes for complaint against Pembroke. Having acquired the parterre, she considered that she had a right of property over the Wren wall which now formed the boundary between Pembroke's land and her terrace. She was therefore angered when Pembroke sought to improve his view by opening several windows in the wall which 'had remained bricked up ever since the fire [of 1698]'. On 31 March

[504] This building can clearly be seen in Leonard Knyff's bird's-eye view of the palace c.1694-98 (fig.3.12).

[505] Brindle, 'Pembroke House', p.92.

[506] TNA T.54/25, p.206, 2 June 1719: The lease of the terrace walk was granted for an additional rent of £10 per annum.

[507] TNA T.1/295, The Earl of Pembroke's memorial, 1737. As explained above, the terrace provided a private access point to the river for the royal family.

[508] *Ibid.*

1737, Jane wrote in indignation to the King's Surveyor, Thomas Walker, asking him to order Pembroke's workmen to repair these 'holes' or 'breacks' in the wall since they had left her terrace exposed 'to whoever cares to come upon it from my Lord Pembrokes ground'.[509] To make matters even worse, Pembroke also built a place 'for the reception of dung' close to the end of the terrace.[510] Having perused the petitions of both parties 'with the utmost impartiality [he] was capable of', Walker advised the Treasury that the dispute could only be determined in a court of Law.[511] Consequently, both the Countess and Pembroke were put to the expense of engaging lawyers, resulting in a legal battle which persisted for seven years.

Not surprisingly, Jane's relationship with Pembroke deteriorated even further during this time. In April 1740 she complained to her son of the 'trouble and expence' to which Pembroke had put her, describing him as 'a person without any principle of honour or honesty'.[512] It seems that Pembroke was able to leverage his position as both a senior courtier (he was groom of the stool to George II from 1735-50) and politician to press his advantage in the dispute. Jane was particularly peeved that Horatio Walpole, the cofferer of the Royal Household, was frequently to be found socialising with the Pembrokes, 'playing at whisk with La[dy] Pembroke & being often in their partys', with the result that he came to be 'my Ld Pem[broke's] strongest solicitor at the Treasury to have this affaire pusht on & decided.'[513] Whether or not this was

[509] TNA CRES 2/1655, Countess of Portland to Thomas Walker, 31 March 1737.

[510] TNA T.1/295, Countess of Portland's memorial, 3 June 1737.

[511] TNA T.1/295, Thomas Walker's recommendation to the Treasury dated 14 June 1737.

[512] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.127: JB to WB, 29 April [1740].

[513] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.112: JB to WB, 1 April [1740]. As Cofferer of the Royal Household, Horace Walpole (1678-1757) assisted his brother, Robert Walpole, in the House of Commons, effectively acting as deputy leader. M. Drummond, 'WALPOLE, Horatio (1678-1757), of Wolterton, Norf.'

Pembroke's strategy, his approach to the case proved successful as, on 23 May 1740, Jane reported that the Treasury had ordered her 'to be prosecuted at law' having judged the wording of her 1719 lease to be invalid.[514] This judgement rested on the hypothesis that the lease incorrectly described the terrace as 'a building' rather than a piece of land, thereby rendering it void. It appears that Pembroke and his lawyer took advantage of this technicality to win the case. Seething with indignation over this perceived injustice, Jane lamented:

> The King is ye worst Landlord, not being […] forcet as private people may be by equity, to make good any defects in the lease they grant. I wish I had never been his tenant having laid out a great deal of mony I shall never see again.[515]

In a final attempt to defend her position in February 1743, Jane petitioned the Treasury for 'a stay of the proceedings against her'. However, this was subsequently rejected by the King.[516] Eventually, in 1744, new leases were issued to both Pembroke and the Countess, entitling them each to the part of the terrace lying directly in front of their respective properties (figs 3.26 and 3.27). Whether or not Jane and Pembroke were ever able to repair their damaged relationship remains unclear. Pembroke evidently attained a certain notoriety for his aggressiveness during the lawsuit. This is

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https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1715-1754/member/walpole-horatio-1678-1757 [accessed 19 November 2019].

[514] *Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers*, vol.4, pp.241-48: 20 May 1739. The Countess evidently disagreed with this verdict: 'the Terras can never be call'd land, & Ld Pembroke, in his memorial, calls it a building'. BL Egerton MS 1715, f.134: JB to WB, 13 May [1740]. She also pointed out that Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough 'had more foresight than other people' by ensuring that the lease of Marlborough House was 'examined more carefully & so has it in due form'. BL Egerton MS 1715, f.179: JB to WB, 7 October 1740.

[515] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.250: JB to WB, 12 June [1741].

[516] *Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers*, vol.5, pp.233-42: 15 and 24 February 1743.

borne out in the correspondence of the younger Horace Walpole who described Pembroke's behaviour as 'scurrilously indecent, though to a woman', whilst Count Bentinck, Jane's son, judged him to be 'very base and ungentlemanlike'.[517] Such comments suggest that Pembroke's behaviour had transgressed polite society's expectations of gallantry towards elite women, proving detrimental to his reputation.[518] Nonetheless, Jane's rancour towards her neighbour appears to have mellowed over the years. Following Pembroke's sudden death in January 1750, she even expressed a certain admiration for her former foe: 'My Lord Pem[broke] is a loss in many respects, speaking his mind freely & disinterested in the K[ing's] service & would oppose what he thot wrong so as to be feard'.[519]

Modernisation of Whitehall and the building of Westminster Bridge

Those fortunate enough to occupy plots with a river frontage were able to witness one of the greatest engineering feats of the age: the construction of Westminster Bridge between 1739 and 1750. Whitehall residents, the Duke of Richmond and the Earl of Pembroke, were among the original commissioners of the bridge. The latter laid the foundation stone on 29 January 1739 and, over the course of the next twelve years, he supported the project with personal zeal, chairing several meetings and offering his

[517] Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 10 January 1750, in Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol 20, p.108; BL Egerton MS 1712, f.94: WB to JB, 16 April 1737.

[518] See B. Taylor, 'Feminists versus Gallants: Manners and Morals in Enlightenment Britain', *Representations,* 87:1 (2004), p.129: Taylor emphasises that gallantry acquired increasing popularity from the 1730s under the influence of philosophers such as David Hume; See also, M. Cohen, '"Manners" Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830', *Journal of British Studies,* 44:2 (2005): 312-29.

[519] BL Egerton MS 1716, f.180: JB to WB, 16 January 1749/50.

own advice and expertise concerning its design.[520] It seems that the Countess of Portland provided her son with regular updates on the progress of the bridge since, in March 1743, he wrote; 'I am mightily obliged to you for the account of the Bridge which I am very curious to see'.[521] The completed structure, which spanned an impressive distance of 1,223 feet, was hailed as a triumph of modern ingenuity, described by William Maitland as 'one of the finest in the world'.[522]

In order to improve access to Westminster, a broad new thoroughfare, named Parliament Street, was created to run from Whitehall to the Palace of Westminster, and from thence to the bridge itself. Whilst this project greatly improved the flow of traffic through the area, it necessitated the demolition of several buildings including 'Mrs Lowther's House, Yard and Garden' on the east side of the Privy Garden.[523] The proposed changes to the Whitehall area can be seen in Thomas Lediard's plan of 1740, in which the new road cuts a swathe through the palace site, slicing through a section of the Privy Garden in its wake (fig.3.28). A further detailed plan, held by the Office of Works, shows the situation of Mrs Lowther's property, with the new wall enclosing the Privy Garden superimposed over the plan (fig. 3.29). No record survives revealing Mrs Lowther's reaction to losing her home, but, according to a newspaper report of

[520] R.J.B. Walker, *Old Westminster Bridge: The Bridge of Fools,* (North Pomfret: David & Charles, 1979), p.113.

[521] BL Egerton 1712, f.264: WB to JB, 26 March 1743.

[522] W. Maitland, *The History and Survey of London from its foundation to the present time* (London, 1756).

[523] *London Daily Post & General Advertiser*, 14 July 1739.

June 1739, she was paid 'a consideration' for the trouble and expense of relocating to a new address.[524]

The construction of new government buildings at Whitehall also caused disruption to the area. In 1733, the Board of Works issued a report concerning the planned construction of a new Treasury building, designed by William Kent, to the rear of the Cockpit. The report concluded that certain rooms in the adjoining premises, in the possession of Mrs Edith Colledge, would 'very much obstruct the conveniences and the carrying up of the said offices (fig.3.2).'[525] Consequently, Mrs College was obliged to give up her 'handsome Appartment' to accommodate the new building.[526] In compensation for surrendering her lease, Edith was awarded the sum of £1,200 and, in 1737, she was granted a reversionary lease of the house abutting the east side of the Holbein Gate.[527] This somewhat incongruously situated three-bay town house, as seen in Thomas Sandby's view, had been built by William van Huls (Clerk of the Queen's Robes and Wardrobes) in 1712 (fig.3.30). During the later creation of Parliament Street, this property was also demolished, although Edith did not live to witness the loss of her second Whitehall home. She died some time before April 1743, when the contents of her house were sold by auction.[528] As the experiences of both Jane Lowther and Edith College demonstrate, Whitehall's residents risked losing their properties in

[524] *London Daily Post*, 7 June 1739; In her will, she describes herself as 'Jane Lowther of Berkley Square, Westminster' suggesting that she moved there following the repossession of her Whitehall home. TNA PROB 11/794/182, 24 April 1752.

[525] Quoted in *SoL*, vol.14, pp.23-36.

[526] *Original Weekly Journal*, 5-12 April 1718: 'A handsome Appartment has been Built at the Cockpit, at White-hall for Mrs Colledge'. Edith College had served as 'seamstress and starcher' to William and Mary. R. Bucholz, *The Augustan Court: Queen Anne and the Decline of Court Culture*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p.28.

[527] *SoL*, vol.14, p.18. *Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers*, vol.3, pp.358-79: 3 May 1737.

[528] *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 23 April 1743.

the interests of modern improvements. However, their status as leaseholders entitled them to compensation through the granting of an alternative residence or financial reimbursement.

Part 3: Kinship

A number of elite families had a lasting presence in the Whitehall neighbourhood, their residences passing through successive generations in a manner more reminiscent of country house ownership, than characteristic of town houses. For the first three Dukes of Richmond, for example, residence in Whitehall's Privy Garden served to emphasise their royal bloodline but, even for those families who could not boast royal ancestors, ownership of a town house on the site helped to reinforce their aristocratic credentials.[529] This section will focus on two prominent Whitehall families, both dominated by women, which maintained a strong presence in the neighbourhood throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. As noted by Julie Schlarman, elite women played a key role in managing kinship networks during their periods of residence in London.[530]

The first family to be considered is that of of Arabella Godfrey, the erstwhile mistress of the Duke of York (later King James II), and the sister of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (figs 3.3 and 3.4). As noted above, during her relationship with

[529] The Dukes of Richmond were direct descendants of Charles II and his mistress, Louise de Kerouaille. Significantly, Richmond House was situated close to the site of Louise's former lodging in the palace. R. Baird, 'Richmond House in London: Its history: Part I', *The British Art Journal*, 8:2 (2007), p.5.

[530] Schlarman, 'Social Geography', p.18.

James, Arabella had been in possession of a large lodging in Middle Scotland Yard.[531] Despite falling from royal favour in 1678, she had returned to live in Whitehall twenty years later as the wife of the courtier, Colonel Charles Godfrey. She continued to occupy her husband's lodgings on becoming a widow in 1714 and remained there until her own death in 1730. As we have seen, her two daughters, Charlotte and Elizabeth, also occupied residences in Whitehall, first as the wives of senior courtiers, then as widows – and consequently leaseholders – in their own right. Both women lost their husbands at a relatively young age, and experienced extended periods of widowhood; twenty years in the case of Charlotte, and forty-two years in that of Elizabeth.

The second family focused on here is that of Jane, Countess of Portland, whose dispute with the Earl of Pembroke was discussed above. Jane was the widow of Hans William Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709) (figs 3.5 and 3.6). As already noted, the 1st Earl's Whitehall residence overlooking the river, known as Portland House, had been one of the few buildings in the Privy Garden to escape the fire of 1698.[532] On the Earl's death in 1709, he had left Portland House to his eldest son and heir, Henry Bentinck (1682-1726), obliging his widow to give up her apartments to her stepson and his family.[533] However, as we have seen, the dowager Countess had acquired a lease on a set of lodgings immediately to the north of Portland House in 1718 after she was appointed governess to the granddaughters of George I. Her new residence in the Privy Garden provided her with the ideal locale from which to carry

[531] Arabella was also granted a new house in St James's Square between 1675 and 1678. See *SoL*, vols 29-30, 174-80.

[532] *Flying Post or The Post Master*, 4-6 January 1698.

[533] Henry Bentinck (*c.*1682-1726) was the Earl's eldest son from his first marriage to Anne Villiers (d.1688) (fig.3.5). The Countess received 'all the furniture whatsoever belonging to her Apartments at Whitehall' but not the apartments themselves: TNA PROB 11/512/365 Will of William Bentinck, Earl of Portland, 1709.

out her royal duties, besides helping to reinforce her status and position as a senior courtier. Six years later, Jane had erected a further building adjacent to her lodgings, thereby creating two dwellings on the site. Having moved into the new house, she was able to sublet the original property (fig.3.2). Between 1731 and 1745, it was rented by her son-in-law, the politician, Viscount Limerick, who had married her daughter, Harriet, in 1730.[534] Meanwhile, Portland House to the south had passed into the possession of William, 2nd Duke of Portland, who took up residence there in 1734 on his marriage to the wealthy heiress, Lady Margaret Harley.[535] The Bentinck family thus formed a prominent kinship network in the Whitehall neighbourhood throughout the first half of the eighteenth century.

Widowed women had much to gain in terms of support and companionship by living near their relatives in town. This was certainly the case for Arabella Godfrey. Her youngest daughter, Elizabeth Dunch, had lived in a riverside residence in Scotland Yard since 1708.[536] Mother and daughter appear to have enjoyed a close relationship, likely to have become even stronger when Elizabeth was herself widowed in 1719.[537] Meanwhile, Arabella's elder daughter and son-in-law, Charlotte and Hugh Boscawen, had lived in their residence adjoining the Holbein Gate since 1716. Arabella must have benefited from dwelling in the same neighbourhood as her two daughters and

[534] In November 1740, Limerick brought his wife and children over from Ireland to reside in Whitehall, prompting his mother-in-law to write: 'I shall have some new discipation for my thots by Ld Limerick bringing his family into my neighbourhood', BL Egerton MS 1715, f.193: JB to WB, 4 November 1740.

[535] Margaret Bentinck, Duchess of Portland (1715-85) is best known as a celebrated collector of curiosities, who converted part of the house into a museum following her husband's death in 1761.

[536] Prior to her marriage, Arabella had four illegitimate children with James II. Her marriage to Charles Godfrey produced three children: Charlotte, Francis (who died in 1712) and Elizabeth.

[537] John Callow describes Elizabeth Dunch as Arabella's favourite daughter. See J. Callow, 'Churchill [married name Godfrey], Arabella', *ODNB* (2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5394.

numerous grandchildren.[538] Her residence on the site of the former palace also provided an appropriate setting in which to receive her royal descendants from her relationship with James II. One of these was her grandson, James Fitz-James Stuart, Duke of Liria (1696-1738), who lived in exile in France (fig.3.4). In September 1720, a newspaper reported that the Duke of Liria, was 'hourly expected here from France to see his Grandmother, Madame Godfrey, who, we hear, is making great Preparations for his Reception at her house in Whitehall'.[539] The young Duke must have made an impressive sight as he entered the capital with 'a retinue of fifty persons'. He was also welcomed by 'his Aunts Lady Falmouth and Mrs Dunch' who later accompanied him to Windsor to visit their mutual relatives, the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.[540]

As a widow, Arabella found herself in an enviable position of economic strength. Over the course of her eventful life as a royal mistress, she had amassed a considerable personal fortune which had been further enhanced by her husband's legacy and a generous pension from her brother, the Duke of Marlborough.[541] However, following her death on 4 May 1730, a bitter dispute broke out between her two daughters concerning her estate. A few months earlier, she had altered her will to make her youngest daughter, Elizabeth, sole executrix and chief beneficiary of her estate, valued at over £30,000. Meanwhile, Charlotte received a much-reduced legacy of £4000, together with a pair of diamond earrings. Spurred on by a sense of injustice, Charlotte and her husband took legal action against Elizabeth, contending that Arabella

[538] Elizabeth Dunch had four daughters, whilst her sister, Charlotte Boscawen had a total of eighteen children, of which nine reached adulthood. *Whitehall Evening Post*, 23-26 March 1754.

[539] *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*, 3 September 1720.

[540] *Ibid.*

[541] Callow, 'Churchill, Arabella': Arabella received a generous royal pension from 1692. She invested in the Bank of England after its establishment in 1694 and from 1722, the Duke of Marlborough's will granted her a further pension of £400 per annum.

was ‘very much weakened in her reason and understanding’ at the time of making the will and therefore ‘more […] liable to give way to [Elizabeth’s] insinuations and solicitations’.[542] According to the two plaintiffs, Elizabeth had convinced her frail mother that it would ‘not be proper’ to make Charlotte joint executrix on the basis that she was ‘a married woman’ who could be unduly influenced by her husband. Arabella had therefore agreed to name Elizabeth sole ‘Executrix and Residuary Legatee’, with the understanding that the two sisters could ‘afterwards manage matters as they thought fit without the control or interposition of [Viscount Falmouth].’[543] However, following Arabella’s death, Elizabeth had allegedly failed to honour this obligation. Assuming these allegations to have been true, it is interesting to note how Elizabeth leveraged her status as an independent widow to gain a financial advantage over her sister.[544] Unfortunately for Charlotte and her husband, the case was eventually decided ‘in Favour of Mrs. Dunch’.[545] Consequently Elizabeth came into a considerable fortune which included many valuable paintings, ornaments and items of furniture which her mother had amassed as a royal mistress.[546] Elizabeth chose to remain in her house in Scotland Yard for the remainder of her long widowhood. Here, she displayed her collection of treasures and paintings, eventually auctioned by her own daughter after her death in 1761.[547]

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[542] TNA C/11/500/19, Earl of Falmouth v. Dunch, 1730.

[543] *Ibid.*

[544] For a discussion on sibling acrimony caused by inequitable inheritance, see A. Harris, *Siblinghood and social relations in Georgian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp.87-96.

[545] *London Evening Post*, 9-11 July 1730.

[546] Callow, ‘Churchill [married name Godfrey], Arabella’. For a detailed list of jewels, plate, furnishings etc., see TNA PROB 3/29/134: Inventory of all Goods and Chattells Rights and Credits of Arrabella Godfrey…, 2 July 1730.

[547] London, National Art Library: ‘A Catalogue of the genuine and curious collection of Italian, Dutch, and Flemish Pictures of the Honourable Mrs Dunch of Whitehall, deceased’, Prestage and Hobbs, 10

When Charlotte, Lady Falmouth, was herself widowed four years later, she inherited a life interest in her husband's 'dwelling house at Whitehall', although she appears to have struggled to meet the expense of maintaining the property.[548] Consequently, in 1737, she divided the house into two separate dwellings, one of which she agreed to sublet to her aunt, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, who required the lodging for her grandson, John Spencer (fig.3.31).[549] Sarah evidently complained about the standard of the accommodation as, in May 1737, Charlotte wrote to her; 'tis a very great concern to find that you are now disatisfy'd with [my house] […] I have studdy'd everything in my power to make the House agreeable to your Grace and comfortable & convenient for Mr Spencer to live in'.[550] At this stage, Charlotte was clearly unwilling to admit to her financial difficulties, claiming 'twas not out of regard to the Rent but purely to accommodate Mr Spencer that I parted with those Roomes'. However, by 1743, she found herself unable to satisfy her mortgager, whereupon she turned to her aunt once more, this time making no attempt to conceal her desperation:

> My case is the time for equity of redemption of my house will be out on the 20th of this month and the mortgagee determines then to take possession & turn me quite out of doors […] I fear he will not take less for both [houses] together than four thousand pounds and I cannot raise more than one thousand. I therefore hope your Grace won't think the worse of me for begging you

and 11 December 1761. Following the example set by her mother, Elizabeth Dunch left all her real estate to her favoured daughter, Elizabeth, Lady Oxendon: TNA PROB 11/870: Last will and testament of Elizabeth Dunch, 19 February 1760.

[548] *SoL*, vol.14, pp.59-60.

[549] See chapter 1 for discussion on Sarah's relationship with John Spencer.

[550] BL Add MS 61441, f.205: Charlotte Boscawen to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 2 May 1737.

> Madam (whose sincere friendship I have often experienced) to advance the rest and take the whole in mortgage. This will save me from utter ruin[551]

It seems that the Duchess failed to succumb to Charlotte's emotional appeal. Lady Falmouth's name disappears from the rate books after this date and the two houses were repeatedly advertised for sale in the newspaper between January 1744 and December 1746.[552] According to the Earl of Cardigan, the Duchess of Montagu, Charlotte's first cousin and neighbour, offered £3000 to purchase the entire property for the use of her grandson, Lord Brudenell, but the sale did not go ahead because of 'some disputes arising in the Boscawen family'.[553] The house was finally sold after Charlotte's death in March 1754 'for the benefit of her younger children', whereupon it came into the possession of Sir Matthew Featherstonehaugh.[554] This new owner considered the building in 'so Ruinous a condition' that he pulled down both existing dwellings and erected a new house on the site to the designs of James Paine.[555]

The experience of Lady Falmouth sheds important light on the complexity of aristocratic kinship networks in relation to property. Despite inhabiting the same neighbourhood as her mother and sister, Charlotte's disappointment over her inequitable share in her mother's will is likely to have caused lasting damage to her relationship with her younger sister. Moreover, her attempts to elicit assistance from her wealthy aunt, the Duchess of Marlborough, proved unsuccessful. Like her mother

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[551] BL Add MS 61441, f.205-208b Charlotte Boscawen to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 14 January 1743.

[552] *Daily Advertiser*, 14 December 1744; *London Evening Post*, 22-24 May 1746.

[553] HMC *Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry*, vol.1, p.414: from George, Earl of Cardigan, received 22 March 1754. The Earl of Cardigan was the Duchess of Montagu's son-in-law.

[554] *Ibid.*

[555] *SoL*, vol.14, pp.56-67.

before her, Charlotte appears to have regarded her Whitehall home as a valuable asset. However, the expense involved in maintaining the property ultimately defeated her. By the time of her death, she had moved to a house in Stretton Street in nearby Westminster.[556]

Once their children had reached adulthood, the upholding of family relations was an essential aspect of the role of elite women, particularly when an extensive family network was involved. In the case of Jane, Countess of Portland, living in Whitehall allowed her to play an active role in the lives of her adult children and grandchildren. As one of her letters reveals, she firmly believed in the positive impact of parental influence: 'The blessing of having good parants yt have always given good example to their children can never be enough acknowledg'd.'[557] Widowed for the second time at the age of thirty-seven, Jane's wealth and status left her in a position of relative authority over her extensive family. [558] In addition to six children of her own, she had several step-children and grandchildren from her husband's first marriage (fig.3.5).[559] Naomi Tadmor has noted that such complex family groups were far from unusual in the period. Both men and women were frequently widowed at a relatively young age, and remarriage could lead to the acquisition of half-relations and step-relations.[560] During her long period of residency in Whitehall, Jane could claim kinship links to several households in the neighbourhood. Her ties to the families of the Duke of Portland and Viscount Limerick have already been mentioned. A further kinship

[556] *London Evening Post*, 21-23 March 1754.

[557] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.3: JB to WB, 13 January [1730].

[558] For a discussion of how the wealth of individual women complicated the patriarchal model see, Tague, 'Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family', p.203. The Countess's first marriage was to John, 3rd Baron Berkeley of Stratton who had died in 1697. There were no surviving children from their union.

[559] The Earl of Portland had 6 children by his first wife, Anne Villiers (d.1688) (fig.3.5).

[560] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p.34.

link was forged when Jane's younger son, Charles Bentinck, married the Duchess of Richmond's sister, Margaret Cadogan in 1738, reinforcing the close tie which already existed between the Richmond and Portland households, both located in the Privy Garden.

Rachel Stewart has observed that family members in this period often treated the town house much as a hotel, 'using it as a stopover point when travelling or as temporary lodgings in the city itself'.[561] This was certainly the case for Jane's two sons who resided in the Hague but would stay with their mother on their visits to London. Three weeks after his marriage, which took place in Holland, her younger son, Charles, and his new bride, Margaret, headed to London to stay with her, an event eagerly anticipated in the *Weekly Miscellany*; 'they are hourly expected at the Countess of Portland's in Privy Garden'.[562] Whilst staying with her new mother-in-law, Margaret appears to have spent considerable time with her sister, the Duchess of Richmond, leaving her less sociable new husband at home with his mother: 'La[dy] Margaret has I think never past above one day at home, her sister is not easy without her at home or else in the party […] Charles never puts any difficulties to this, provided they don't oblige him to go too.'[563] Jane clearly derived considerable pleasure from these prolonged family visits. When Charles and his wife finally returned to the Hague, she wrote; 'he [Charles] has given me so much of his company & been so agreable, as well

[561] Stewart, *Town House*, p.44.

[562] *Weekly Miscellany*, 20 January 1739. Margaret Bentinck (née Cadogan), wife of Charles, is not to be confused with the wife of the 2nd Duke of Portland, also known as Margaret Bentinck following her marriage.

[563] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.80: JB to WB, 15 January 1740.

as his wife in my house, yt I must be a long time before I can get ust to his being from me'.[564]

A crucial role of elite women with unmarried children was to put them in the way of suitable marriage partners. As noted by Stewart, residence in London both facilitated appropriate introductions and offered a wider range of alliances than life in the country.[565] Whilst living with her mother in the Privy Garden, Jane's youngest daughter, Barbara Bentinck, found an eligible husband in the locality in the person of 'the Hon Francis Godolphin of Scotland Yard', whom she married in 1734 at St James's Chapel. Following the ceremony, 'the new married Couple together with several other persons of the first rank, were entertained by the Countess of Portland in a sumptuous manner at her house in the Privy Garden'.[566] Prior to Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753, it was possible to hold wedding ceremonies in private houses.[567] Consequently, when Emily Lennox, daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, married the Earl of Kildare in February 1747, the *London Evening Post* reported that 'the Ceremony was performed by the Reverend Mr Green, Chaplain, to his Grace, at his House in the Privy Garden, Whitehall'.[568]

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[564] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.106: JB to WB, 4 March 1740.

[565] Stewart, *Town House*, p.33.

[566] *London Journal*, 23 February 1734; Barbara died 'of a fever' only two years later. Her death is reported as having taken place 'at her Mother's house in the Privy Garden', suggesting that Jane was nursing her daughter at the time of her final illness, *London Evening Post*, 30 March-1 April 1736.

[567] See O'Connell, *London 1753*, p.86: 'Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 required marriages to take place in prescribed Church of England churches and chapels'. One of the most vociferous opponents of the marriage act was Henry Fox, who had married another daughter of the Duke of Richmond, Caroline Lennox, in a clandestine wedding ceremony which took place at the house of Charles Hanbury-Williams in Conduit Street. S. Tillyard, *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louise and Sarah Lennox 1740-1832* (London: Chatto, 1995), p.28.

[568] *London Evening Post*, 7-10 February 1747.

Jane's house evidently provided an important base from which to play the role of guardian to the younger members of the family.[569] In 1721, her stepson, Henry, 1st Duke of Portland, was appointed Governor of Jamaica, obliging him and his wife, Elizabeth, to move to Spanish Town.[570] Their two sons, however, stayed to be educated at Eton College near Windsor, and they often spent the school holidays in Whitehall.[571] As their step-grandmother, Jane appears to have acted *in loco parentis* whilst their parents were overseas. Surviving letters from the boys' mother, Elizabeth Bentinck (d.1737), reveal that she received regular reports from the Countess regarding her sons' behaviour and education:

> I take it as a great favour from you dear Madame in giving me so true an account of the behaviour of the children & their education & am entirely of your opinion that there is no care or expence to be sav'd in there [*sic*] education & beg that you will give your advice in whatever you think so proper.[572]

By the time Jane reached her late seventies, she had several grandchildren of her own who often came to stay with her in Whitehall. In June 1750, many of them descended

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[569] For a discussion on the importance of guardians and trustees in eighteenth-century consumption see J. Stobart and M. Rothery. *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.183.

[570] Henry Bentinck, 1st Duke of Portland, took up the post in Jamaica after suffering considerable losses in the South Sea Bubble. R. Sedgwick, 'BENTINCK, Henry, Visct. Woodstock (c.1682-1726), of Titchfield, Hants.' http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/bentinck-henry-1682-1726. [accessed 17 December 2020].

[571] Whilst the Duke and Duchess were in Jamaica, their house in the Privy Garden was sub-let to Lord Lynn but it appears that part of the property was reserved for their two sons. See BL Egerton MS 1711, f.127: Elizabeth Bentinck to Jane Bentinck, Jamaica, 20 February 1723: 'I am glad your Ladysh approves of the Lodgins [*sic*] that we made for the children in Whitehall for to be sure there is room enough both for Lord Lynn & them'; Westminster rate-books for the Parish of St Margaret and St John, volume E345 (1724).

[572] BL Egerton MS 1711, f.183: Elizabeth Bentinck to JB, 25 September 1725.

on her at once, leading her to complain, 'my house is now so full yt I can scarce breath.'[573]

The presence of close kin in a neighbourhood could be of particularly significant value following childbirth or during an illness. Both the Duchess of Richmond and Lady Limerick chose to remain in Whitehall rather than retreating to their country residences for lying-in.[574] Of course, the presence of highly qualified doctors and midwives in town made it a wise decision to give birth there, but kinship networks were also important for providing support and company in the weeks immediately following the birth. Moreover, baptisms would take place at the end of the lying-in period, making it far more convenient for the family and godparents if the mother and child were based in town. For example, in 1743, Lord and Lady Limerick's daughter was baptised at their Whitehall residence, with Princess Amelia and the Duchess of Richmond, acting as godparents.[575] Family members who lived in the neighbourhood could also, on occasion, stand in for absent godparents. When the 2nd Duke and Duchess of Portland baptised their son in the Privy Garden in May 1738, the Countess of Portland stood as 'Proxy for an Aunt of the Duke's in Holland.'[576]

During the year 1741, a number of elite households in the Privy Garden took advantage of the opportunity to inoculate their children against smallpox. This was a controversial procedure, since it could result in a healthy patient contracting a full-

[573] BL Egerton MS 1716, f.216: Elizabeth Bentinck to JB, 3 July 1750.

[574] *Grub Street Journal*, 1 October 1730; *Daily Gazeteer*, 29 April 1743. For a full discussion on the staging of the lying-in period in London, see chapter 5.

[575] *General Evening Post*, 17-19 May 1743.

[576] *Daily Post*, 12 May 1738.

blown version of the disease.[577] It had first been carried out on English soil when Lady Mary Wortley Montagu commissioned Dr Charles Maitland to engraft her daughter with the virus following a smallpox epidemic in 1721. The following year, Princess Caroline commissioned public trials to be carried out on six Newgate prisoners, before arranging for her own daughters to be inoculated in April 1722.[578] As the royal governess, the Countess of Portland had been a close witness to this, with the result that she too became an influential proponent of the practice. It therefore seems likely that the decision to inoculate a substantial number of children in the Whitehall neighbourhood was in large part due to Jane's influence. The inoculations appear to have taken place between February and April 1741, starting with two of the Countess's grandchildren. On 14 February, the *London & Country Journal* reported: 'Sunday last, a Son and Daughter of the Right Hon the Lord Viscount Limerick were inoculated for the small pox at his Lordship's House in the Privy Garden by the direction of Dr. Broxholme & Dr Tessier.'[579] This type of public announcement shows how the actions of elite families were deemed of interest and relevance to a wider public, most likely encouraging readers to follow suit. A month later, another granddaughter, Anne Egerton, came to stay with the Countess so she too could be inoculated against the virus.[580] Finally, the Duke and Duchess of Richmond decided to inoculate their children, prompting Jane to inform her son; 'the duke of Richmond's three children

[577] See H. Esfandiary, '"We could not answer to ourselves not doing it": maternal obligations and knowledge of smallpox inoculation in eighteenth-century elite society', *Historical Research*, 92:258 (November 2019), pp.754-70.

[578] D. Barnes, 'The Public Life of a Woman of Wit and Quality: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Vogue for Smallpox Inoculation', *Feminist Studies*, 38: 2 (2012), p.334.

[579] *London & Country Journal*, 14 February 1741. Dr Noel Broxholme and George Tessier both attended Queen Caroline during her final illness.

[580] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.212: JB to WB, 27 March [1741]

had it given them Fryday but Dss of Richmond desires it may be kept a secret least it should give her mother uneasiness […].'[581]

During the entire inoculation period, the three households were united by the requirement to remain in quarantine and to support one another. The Countess, in particular, was fully occupied nursing the inoculated children: 'I have been so attending sick people for this four months that I have known but little of what has past in my own house.'[582] When, that same month, Jane herself fell ill with a heavy cold, she turned to her daughter, Harriet (Lady Limerick), for support: [I] have been made to feel the comfort I have enjoyed in Hall's [Harriet's] being so near me now for that has brought her to me every minuet [*sic*]'. Meanwhile Jane's own servant, 'poor Betty', was 'vastly uneasy, to have been oblig'd from the small pox to be absent'.[583] However, by 7 May, all three households appear to have returned to full health, prompting the Countess to write, 'the dss of Richmond has been here today, looks perfectly well and happy in her children being so very successfully past thro ye smallpox.'[584]

Kinship and politics

Given their proximity to both the royal court and the seat of government at Westminster, Whitehall's female residents had ample opportunity to engage in political matters on behalf of their families, albeit in an unofficial capacity. As Elaine Chalus has observed, women who were members of politically active families 'grew up with politics, absorbed its rituals, had their socializing inflected by it and frequently even

[581] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.220: JB to WB, 21 April [1741].

[582] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.218: JB to WB, 17 April [1741].

[583] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.214: JB to WB, 7 April [1741].

[584] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.230: JB to WB, 7 May [1741].

had the shapes of their lives dictated by its annual patterns'.[585] The daughters of the Duke of Richmond, for example, were brought up in the vibrant political environment of their Whitehall home, surrounded by their father's political allies and associates. The two eldest daughters, Caroline and Emily, later married prominent politicians, but their contrasting attitudes towards political engagement illustrate the degree to which personality played a part in the nature and extent of women's involvement in this realm. Emily, who married the Irish politician Lord Kildare in 1747, found politics 'a natural outlet for her intellect and vivacity', and often assisted her husband in his political machinations. Caroline, however, who eloped with the Whig MP, Henry Fox, acquired a 'distaste' for the political world, with the consequence that she rarely engaged with her husband's, or later her son's, political career.[586]

Charlotte and Elizabeth Godfrey likewise grew up in a political household. Their father was a prominent Whig politician, and their mother, as sister to the Duke of Marlborough, belonged to one of the most powerful political families of the period. Both the Godfrey sisters married Whig politicians and it seems that Charlotte, in particular, took pains to promote her husband's career.[587] When, in 1727, she solicited Lady Sundon for a position as lady of the bedchamber to Queen Caroline, she referred to 'the vast obligation it would be to Lord Falmouth' if she were to be granted 'this mark of favour', which would be 'such a countenance to his interest at the next Elections.'[588] As this suggests, the strong connection between royal and political

[585] Chalus, *Elite Women*, p.228.

[586] *Ibid*., p.70. Caroline Fox was the mother of Charles James Fox, the celebrated Whig stateman of George III's reign.

[587] The Duke of Newcastle described Edmund Dunch as 'a true Whig'. R. Bucholz, 'Dunch, Edmund (1677-1719)', *ODNB* (2005), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8234.

[588] Mrs Thompson. *Memoirs of Viscountess Sundon, Mistress of the Robes to Queen Caroline* (London, 1847), p.318: Lady Falmouth to Viscountess Sundon, 1 July [1727].

power meant that female courtiers were well placed to promote the political interests of their male relatives.[589] Unfortunately, Charlotte appears to have jeopardised her application by offering Lady Sundon 'a handful of bank bills' as a bribe, 'for which reason [Lady Sundon] never spoke more for her'.[590] However, it appears that Charlotte was still able to support her husband as a political hostess since, in May 1733, the *Daily Courant* reported that 'the Speaker of the House of Commons and Several Persons of Distinction' had attended a 'grand Entertainment' at Lord Falmouth's 'House at Whitehall'.[591] Not only was their town house ideally situated for hosting such events, but the couple's familial connections are likely to have enhanced their social status and political influence.[592]

Living in close proximity to Westminster, Whitehall's female residents had privileged access to the latest news from parliamentary debates.[593] This provided them with the opportunity to provide valuable information to family members, especially those living abroad. Jane, Countess of Portland, frequently conveyed political news to her son in the Hague. Thanks to her elite contacts in the neighbourhood, she could inform him of events within hours of their occurrence. For example, during the conflict between Britain and Spain, known as the War of Jenkins' Ear, she wrote: 'The Dss of Richmond having supt with me Sunday night, the duke came in with the letters just then come; Vernon is a brave courageous commander to go on this attack so boldly as

[589] See Campbell Orr, 'Mrs Delany and the Court', p.41.

[590] Thompson, *Memoirs of Viscountess Sundon*, p.317.

[591] *Daily Courant*, 19 May 1733.

[592] Hugh Boscawen, Viscount Falmouth, was the son of Jael Godolphin, sister of Sidney Godolphin and a great friend of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. As noted, the latter was also Charlotte's aunt.

[593] Chalus has drawn attention to the value of political news provided in women's correspondence: *Elite Women*, p.82.

by ye accts he did'.[594] Jane's news was, of course, inflected with her own opinions and prejudices, and she sought to influence her son's interpretation of events. Later in the same letter, for example, she describes how Vernon's election to Parliament had been opposed by the Court, adding: 'I wish him all the honour he deserves & hope he will go on with ye same good success.' Similarly, in May 1746, as reports filtered into London in the aftermath of the Battle of Culloden, Jane implied that she enjoyed privileged access to the latest news through her intimacy with the royal family: 'P[rincess A[melia] dines here today & perhaps then may know something.'[595]

Jane's letters to her son also offered insight into politically charged court gossip, providing a perspective on events not reported in the newspapers. When the Duke of Cumberland's defeat of the Jacobite rebellion was first heard of in London, he was hailed as a great military hero. The King and Princess Amelia toured the streets of London by coach 'to see the rejoycings & lights wch were universal thro the whole town.'[596] However, less widely known was the jealousy this aroused in the Duke's elder brother, Prince Frederick, prompting Jane to write; 'you may guess how all these rejoycings are felt by some who don't fail to think they would have been their share had they been given as they wanted, the command of the Army.'[597] She later described Frederick's attempts to taint the Duke's reputation by 'saying in his public circle yt the way ye Scotch were killd at Culloden was a masacre.'[598]

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[594] BL Egerton MS 1715, f.233: JB to WB, 19 May [1741]; In March 1741 Admiral Edward Vernon launched an attack on Cartagena de Indias.

[595] BL Egerton MS 1716, f.115: JB to WB, 27 May 1746.

[596] BL Egerton MS 1716, f.98: JB to WB, 29 April 1746.

[597] *Ibid.*

[598] BL Egerton MS 1716, f.119, JB to WB, 2 June 1746. For the rivalry between Prince Frederick and the Duke of Cumberland, see S. Kinkel, 'Princes and Pamphlet Wars: Princely Rivalry in the Politics of Military Governance in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain', *The Court Historian*, 19:2 (2014): 145-63.

Although elite families often represented political units, problems could arise when members of the same kinship group held opposing views. Jane's next-door neighbour and son-in-law, Viscount Limerick, was a prominent figure in the Whig opposition party, whilst most of his in-laws supported the Government.[599] Following Robert Walpole's resignation in 1742, Limerick was appointed Chairman of the Committee of Enquiry, set up to investigate the conduct of Walpole's administration over the preceding ten years.[600] During the following weeks, meetings of the so-called 'secret committee' were held at Mrs Lowther's house in the Privy Garden, hired specifically for this purpose.[601] Meanwhile, Walpole's brother, Horatio, whose London residence was also in Whitehall, rushed back to his estate at Wolterton and burnt large quantities of his personal papers to avoid their seizure by the committee (fig.3.2).[602] Around this time, Jane's relationship with her own daughter came under strain. Whilst Harriet, Lady Limerick, supported her husband in his endeavours to expose the corruption of Walpole's administration, the Countess considered the findings of the committee 'so very trifling as to shew they have sat to very little purpose.'[603] Writing to her son, she explained how she and Harriet kept 'together very well by never talking or very little upon publick affaires'.[604] Meanwhile, Jane suspected that Margaret, the

[599] The Whig party was divided into two rival factions: Walpole's supporters and the anti-Walpole opposition.

[600] Stephen Taylor describes the committee's findings as 'distinctly underwhelming'. S. Taylor, 'Walpole, Robert, first earl of Orford (1676-1745)', *ODNB* (2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28601.

[601] *Daily Post*, 5 April 1742. It appears that the house had been vacated by Jane Lowther at this time but was still awaiting demolition (see above).

[602] P. Woodfine, 'Walpole, Horatio [Horace], first Baron Walpole of Wolterton (1678-1757)', *ODNB* (2011), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28595.

[603] BL Egerton MS 1716, f.12: JB to WB, 18 May 1742.

[604] BL Egerton MS 1716, f.2: JB to WB, 30 April 1742.

young Duchess of Portland, had persuaded her husband to support the actions of the secret committee: 'I have been told that the Dss has not seem'd to disapprove of what was doing at present […] she will always endeavour to keep her Lord […] most with her own family & he will give into it out [of] indolence'.[605] Margaret's natal family, the Harleys, were strongly associated with the Tory Party, and therefore opposed to Walpole's government.

Over the following couple of years, family tensions appear to have worsened. In 1744, Jane's elder daughter, Sophia, gave her own account of what she referred to as 'ye daily *critclickeits*' her mother received from her 'next door neighbour' (Lady Limerick).[606] She claimed that Harriet (her sister) had entirely altered her conduct towards her natal family, owing to the influence of her husband: 'There is in general a constant disposition to dislike or find fault with what any of us do but some how or another she [Harriet] is chiefly levell'd at my Mother.[607]

As such extracts from the Bentinck family's correspondence reveal, women were often drawn into political discussion with members of their kinship group. Due to the factional nature of party politics in this period, aristocratic families were often divided by conflicting allegiances. Whilst Lady Limerick sided with her husband rather than her natal family, Margaret, Duchess of Portland, successfully persuaded her husband to align himself with the political position of the Harley family. The heated debates at Westminster thus spilled over into Whitehall's elite residences, affecting men and women alike.

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[605] BL Egerton MS 1716, f.1: JB to WB, 30 April 1742.

[606] BL Egerton MS 1721, f.61: Sophia Grey, dowager Duchess of Kent, to WB, 24 March 1744.

[607] *Ibid.*

Conclusion

In contrast to other elite residential areas of the West End, the layout of eighteenth-century Whitehall was largely dictated by the plan of the Tudor palace. The site's rich and complex history is therefore crucial to understanding its unique topography and eclectic architectural character. Whitehall's prime location at the centre of royal and political life, and its riverside setting, ensured that it remained one of London's most prestigious addresses throughout the early Georgian period. By foregrounding Whitehall's significant female population, this chapter has highlighted the various roles enacted by women in relation to this royal neighbourhood. Significantly, most of the women focused on here outlived their husbands by several decades. However, rather than retreating to a dower house in the country, they chose to direct their resources to maintaining property in Whitehall, indicating the value attached to the area. This involved both repairing existing structures which had survived the fire of 1698 and building new extensions to their homes. Some were even willing to resort to litigation to defend their plots, despite the fact that their property would ultimately revert to the crown.

Many of England's leading aristocratic families favoured Whitehall as their London base. By focusing on the Bentinck and the Godfrey-Churchill families, this chapter has drawn attention to various ties binding such kinship communities. It has shown that women often played a crucial role in maintaining these connections. However, it has also explored some of the conflicts which arose between family members inhabiting the same neighbourhood. The town houses of Whitehall thus provided important platforms for elite women's engagement in the familial, royal and political life of the metropolis.

Chapter 4

A Palladian Neighbourhood: The Female residents of the Burlington Estate

Johannes Kip's engraving of Burlington House, after a painting executed by Leonard Knyff between 1698 and 1699, captures the building's appearance and setting at a crucial point in its history (fig.4.1).[608] At this time it had recently come into the ownership of Charles Boyle, 2nd Earl of Burlington (*c.*1662-1704), who was eager to protect the property from engulfment by the expanding city. Knyff's composition seems to have been correspondingly conceived with an eye to emphasising the house's advantageous situation, its south front facing onto the principal thoroughfare of Piccadilly, its north front enjoying unimpeded views over the distant rural landscape.[609] Centrally placed in the composition, the two-storeyed astylar mansion, surmounted by a hipped roof, appears to impose a sense of order over its surroundings. Behind the house extends an immaculate, geometrical garden, its trees arranged at strictly regular intervals. Meanwhile, in the foreground, people of various ranks travel to and from the city by carriage, cart, on horseback and on foot. However, in the top right-hand corner of the image is a triangle of dense urban development, a reminder of

[608] The original image was etched and engraved by Johannes Kip for reproduction in *Britannia Illustrata*, 1707, as shown in fig.4.1.

[609] Knyff took certain liberties in representing the site's layout: 'The extension of the garden beyond the present line of Burlington Gardens is perhaps an anticipation of an impending but short-lived enterprise of the second Earl's.' *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.390-429.

the rapidly expanding metropolis reaching to the eastern limit of the neighbouring garden.[610]

Any ambition the owners of Burlington House may have had to preserve their rural outlook was to be short lived however. Some twenty years after Knyff had recorded this view, the property was effectively merged with the encroaching city when financial difficulties obliged Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington (1694-1753), to develop the six-acre area immediately to the north of his garden. This resulted in the creation of two parallel streets, Cork Street and Old Burlington Street (its extension northwards known as Noel Street), and the cross route, Clifford Street, running west to east.[611] This initial stage in the estate's construction can be seen in the comparison between two prints showing the street layout of St. James's, dated 1685 and 1720 (figs 4.2 and 4.3). A second phase of development followed from 1733 onwards, when New Burlington Street and Savile Street (later Savile Row) were created to the north-east. By 1739, the completed estate covered an area of ten acres as described in a plan published in the *Survey of London* (1963) (fig.4.4a). The estate's relationship to Burlington House and its immediate surroundings can most usefully be seen in a detail of John Rocque's 1746 map (fig.4.5).

This chapter begins by sketching out the early history of Burlington House itself, from its construction in the 1660s to its transformation during the ownership of the 3rd Earl from around 1718 onwards. Its history has already been covered in some detail, most recently by Nicholas Savage, whose meticulous study provides an

[610] Knyff's topographical image drew on the tradition of country house portraiture which tended to 'depict the subject in its best light and hint at the patron's aspirations.' See A. Laurence, 'Space, Status and Gender in English Topographical Paintings, *c.*1660-*c.*1740', *Architectural History*, 46 (2003), p.81.

[611] This six-acre area included the northern half of the garden seen in Kip's engraving.

authoritative guide to the building's evolution over the past three and a half centuries. However, the scope of Savage's survey is necessarily limited to the house itself.[612] This chapter extends his field of enquiry to examine the close relationship between Burlington House and the new residential estate which shared its name. Moreover, it will be argued here that women played a crucial role in both, as mistresses of Burlington House, and as residents on the estate, helping to define the character of this neighbourhood.

Starting with Juliana, Countess of Burlington (1672-1750), mother and guardian to the 3rd Earl, Part 1 examines the significance of her patronage at Burlington House, revealing her vital role in shaping the social and artistic environment which became so closely associated with the Burlington circle (fig.4.6). Part 2 focuses on the construction and layout of the estate itself, identifying and describing some of the key properties occupied by women. The next section, Part 3, examines the complex relationship between the female residents of the estate and the royal court. In exploring some of the tensions that existed in this relationship, the section will show how different the Burlington estate was to the Whitehall neighbourhood, discussed in the previous chapter. However, in common with Whitehall, many of the residents on the Burlington estate were connected to one another through ties of kinship or friendship. Part 4 explores the role of women in reinforcing such networks in this locality. Finally, Part 5 focuses on the importance of artistic patronage to the community of this neighbourhood, examining the role of women in forging relationships with architects, artists and writers. It will show how this fashionable area constituted an especially fertile arena for cultural creativity during

[612] N. Savage, *Burlington House* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2018).

the early eighteenth century, with women at the centre. To assist the reader, figure 4.4b identifies the notable residents referred to in the chapter, male and female, including married couples and prominent members of the so-called 'Burlington circle'.

The nomenclature of the new streets on the estate reinforced the area's identification with members of the Burlington family, and particularly the women. Three of the new streets – Clifford Street, Noel Street and Savile Street – were named after the first three Countesses who brought considerable fortunes into the Burlington family at the time of their marriages (fig.4.7). The use of their family names thus publicly acknowledged their role in augmenting the family's wealth.[613] The 1st Earl's wife, Elizabeth, née Clifford (1621-98), daughter of Henry, 1st Earl of Cumberland, had become Baroness Clifford in her own right in 1628. Thereafter, the Clifford barony had passed through the Burlington family, its final holder being Charlotte Cavendish, née Boyle (1731-54), the elder daughter of the 3rd Earl. Juliana Noel, meanwhile, had married Charles Boyle in 1688 (he became the 2nd Earl when his grandfather died in 1698). She was the only child of the wealthy politician, Henry Noel, consequently inheriting a large proportion of her parents' wealth.[614] Finally, Dorothy Savile (1699-1758) had become Countess of Burlington when she married Richard Boyle, the 3rd Earl, in 1721 (fig.4.8). Dorothy was the granddaughter of George Savile, 1st Marquess of Halifax (1633-95), a trusted adviser to William III and one of the most influential figures in seventeenth-century politics.[615] Following the death of her mother in 1718, she had become the co-heiress of the Halifax estates,

[613] For a discussion on how the surnames of elite women were preserved after marriage, see L. and J. Stone, *An Open Elite? England, 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), p.80.

[614] Wilson, *Elite Women in Ascendancy Ireland*, p.79.

[615] S. Jenkins, 'Lady Burlington at Court', in E. Corp, ed. *Lord Burlington: Questions of Loyalty* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), p.150.

making her an exceptionally attractive marriage partner. Dorothy's fortune as a young bride amounted to around £30,000, in addition to an income of around £1600 per annum from land.[616] She was evidently proud of her Savile lineage, later editing the letters of her grandfather in collaboration with Alexander Pope (1699-1744).[617] Moreover, after becoming a widow in 1756, she moved into a house in Savile Street, suggesting that the street's association with her own family name continued to hold significance for her.

Part 1: Burlington House

The construction of Burlington House began in 1664 when the much sought-after Piccadilly site was purchased by Sir John Denham (1615-69), Surveyor of the King's works. Through his professional experience, Denham had acquired a thorough knowledge of the building trade, and he is thought to have personally designed and overseen the construction of his new London residence.[618] His house was one of three great mansions to be constructed along Piccadilly (then known as Portugal Street) during the 1660s, the other two being Clarendon House and Berkeley House to the west. However, Denham was never to take up residence in his new mansion. Whilst it was still being built, he encountered a series of financial setbacks, with the result that he was obliged to sell the partially built house to Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Burlington (1612-98), in January 1667, for £3,300. At this stage, the property comprised the carcass of a house in three and a half acres of land. The 1st Earl subsequently

[616] Jenkins, 'Lady Burlington at Court', p.152.

[617] Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS CS1/143.23: A. Pope to Lord Burlington, 19 September 1732.

[618] See Savage, *Burlington House*, p.38.

commissioned the architect, Hugh May, to oversee the completion of the building, including its interiors, and from thenceforth it became known as Burlington House.

From an early stage in the building's history, the wives of the Burlington family played a prominent role in its embellishment. Lady Elizabeth Boyle, wife of the 1st Earl, evidently took an interest in the house during the final stages of its construction. In the late 1660s, she received a number of letters, concerning the building work, from her son-in-law, Laurence Hyde. Some of these suggest that Hyde acted as an intermediary between Elizabeth and May, the architect. Passing on the latter's apologies for failing to meet her in town on account of ill health, Hyde wrote, 'he would have gone with you into every roome & have sett downe in writing what you would have had done'.[619] May had also apparently asked Hyde whether Elizabeth wished him to imitate the decoration of 'any roomes in Clarendon house'.[620] As will be seen, this involvement of Elizabeth's in the house's interior decoration was to establish a precedent for the two succeeding Countesses, Juliana and Dorothy.

The 1st Earl of Burlington and his wife occupied the house for over three decades before dying within a few months of one another in 1698. The Burlington estates then passed to their eldest surviving grandson, Charles Boyle, 2nd Earl. The considerable value of the Burlington estates entitled Charles and his heirs to an annual income of £22,000 and ownership of several properties including Lismore Castle in Ireland, Londesborough House in Yorkshire, Chiswick House in Chiswick and Burlington House in London. However, the 1st Earl had placed an injunction in his

[619] BL Althorp Papers, Add MS 75355: Lawrence Hyde to Elizabeth Boyle, Countess of Burlington, 16 April n.d.

[620] *Ibid.* Clarendon House had recently been built by Roger Pratt for Laurence's father, Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon.

will, forbidding his heirs 'to intermeddle' with his house in London.[621] This injunction appears to have been honoured by the 2nd Earl but his tenure was relatively short-lived. When he died in 1704, his heir, Richard Boyle, was only nine years old, so management of the estate was entrusted to Charles's thirty-two-year-old widow, Juliana. She was appointed as guardian to her son until he reached his twenty-first birthday.

Until recently, scholars, eager to promote the reputation of the 3rd Earl as a gifted and precocious architectural patron from an early age, have tended to overlook Juliana's role in the early transformation of Burlington House.[622] However, as suggested in the *Survey of London*, and recently convincingly argued by Savage, it is almost certain that the first stage of the alterations were managed and overseen by the widowed Countess, since her son did not take over responsibility for the estate until he returned from the Grand Tour in 1715.[623] George Knox even goes so far as to suggest that Juliana's patronage in painting, architecture and music reveals 'a more discerning taste than that of her far more celebrated son.'[624] At the time of becoming a widow in 1704, Juliana had already established herself as a high-ranking figure in London society. Two years previously, she had been appointed one of Anne's ladies of the bedchamber, a position she was to retain until the Queen's death in 1714.

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[621] TNA PROB 11/48: will of Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Burlington, quoted in Savage, *Burlington House*, p.46. Savage suggests that the 1st Earl was eager to protect his property from the same fate as Clarendon House, which had been demolished in 1683 to make way for speculative street development.

[622] For example, Steven Parissien makes no mention of the Dowager Countess in his account of the 3rd Earl's alterations to Burlington House. S. Parissien, *Palladian Style* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), p.63.

[623] *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.390-429.

[624] G. Knox, 'Antonio Pellegrini and Marco Ricci at Burlington House and Narford Hall', *The Burlington Magazine*, 130:1028 (November 1988), p.853.

Consequently, Juliana spent the majority of her time in the capital, periodically required to attend Anne at both St James's and Kensington.[625] During this career, she had, furthermore, forged a close friendship with the Queen's favourite, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. [626] The latter's role as an architectural patron is likely to have provided an inspiration for the widowed Countess, especially during the construction of Marlborough House (1709-11), located only a short distance from Piccadilly in St. James's Park.

In addition, Juliana clearly took an active interest in the financial management of her son's affairs. Through a close examination of her correspondence with Richard's agents, Rachel Wilson has shown that the Countess was a highly competent woman of business, tireless in the effective management of the Burlington estates. This was no easy task since the parlous state of the Irish economy had left the family's tenants in Cork and Waterford unable to pay their rents. By 1707, debt accumulated in arrears had amounted to 'upwards of £15,000'.[627] Whilst conscious of the need to economise, it seems likely that the Countess was also eager to dispel potential rumours that the family was close to ruin.[628] Her decision to focus her artistic patronage on Burlington House, the most visible of her son's properties, as in London, may have been a deliberate attempt to promote at least an *image* of prosperity.[629]

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[625] Wilson, *Elite Women in Ascendancy Ireland*, p.79. According to Wilson, Juliana never actually set foot on her son's Irish estates.

[626] See, for example, BL Add MS 61456, f.90: Juliana Boyle to Duchess of Marlborough, n.d. [1722]: Juliana praises Sarah with possessing 'all the good qualitys that can make friendship desirable'.

[627] Wilson, *Elite Women in Ascendancy Ireland*, p.84.

[628] See Savage, *Burlington House*, p.48.

[629] *Ibid*, p.50.

Three significant projects appear to have been overseen by Juliana at Burlington House. She was assisted in these by her agent and lawyer, Richard Graham, who had gained a reputation as an eminent art collector and was therefore well qualified to guide her.[630] The first of these projects was to commission the Venetian artists, Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini and Sebastiano Ricci, to produce a series of canvases to decorate the hall and staircase (executed between 1709 and 1713). Knox has provided compelling evidence that Pellegrini's cycle of six mythological paintings, now housed at Narford Hall, were originally from the hallway of Burlington House.[631] These works took Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as their subject matter; a text evidently familiar to Juliana since Jacob Tonson's 1717 edition of the text includes an engraving dedicated to her.[632] As suggested by Savage, the scenes describing *The Infancy of Achilles* and *The Nursing of Jupiter* may well have been intended to pay homage to Juliana's role in raising her son.[633] Ricci's canvases for the staircase hall also drew on Ovid's texts. Thanks to Peter Schmitt's reconstruction of the staircase, featured in *Country Life* (2004), we can envisage the original arrangement of these canvases and the prominence of the three principal works: *The Triumph of Galatea*, *Diana and Her Nymphs Bathing* and *The Meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne* (fig.4.9). These scenes, celebrating female power, were perhaps intended to pay homage to Ricci's patroness, whilst also offering him the opportunity to create dynamic compositions showcasing his virtuouso technique.

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[630] *Ibid*. Graham was the author of 'Short Account of the most Eminent Painters, both Ancient and Modern', published in the Dryden edition of Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting* (1716), dedicated to the 3rd Earl of Burlington. Charles Boyle, the 2nd Earl, had recommended in his will that Juliana should employ Richard Graham to assist with the management of their son's estate.

[631] Knox, 'Antonio Pellegrini and Marco Ricci', pp.846-53.

[632] J. Tonson, ed., *Ovid's Metamorphoses in Fifteen Books*, Plate to Book 4 (London, 1717).

[633] Savage, *Burlington House*, p.53.

The second project overseen by the Countess involved various alterations to the spatial arrangement of the interior of Burlington House, notably the replacement and repositioning of the staircases, and the creation of doorways to connect the various ground floor rooms. Evidence that these alterations had taken place by the early months of 1715 is provided by a comparison of a hand-drawn plan of 1710 with Colen Campbell's ground floor plan of 1715, published in volume 1 of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (figs 4.10 and 4.11).[634] In Campbell's version, the main staircase has become a far more prominent feature of the interior and three doorways in the west wing have been opened up, creating an enfilade from north to south.[635] However, the final, and arguably most significant, alteration initiated by Juliana was the construction of the office blocks flanking the courtyard from which extended two Doric quadrant colonnades, creating a type of *cour d'honneur* (fig.4.12).[636] This theatrical baroque arrangement appears to have been commissioned by the Countess in 1715 before her son returned from his Grand Tour.[637] It is generally agreed to have been the work of James Gibbs, based on evidence provided by his autobiographical manuscript, recording his work on the house.[638] The visual drama of Gibbs's colonnade made a notable impact on Horace Walpole when he stayed at Burlington House in the late 1760s. Looking out of the window across the courtyard, he remarked: 'I was surprised

[634] See also *SoL*, vol. 31-32, pp.390-429.

[635] *Ibid*., pp.50-51.

[636] Friedman, James Gibbs, p.201. The colonnade is not featured in the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, 1715.

[637] T. Mowl, *William Kent: Architect, Designer, Opportunist* (London: Pimlico, 2007), p.79.

[638] Soane Museum, Gibbs MSS, p.90: 'The Earl of Burlington had him to build and adorne his house and officis in piccadilly, they are all built wt solid portland stone as is likewise the fine circular colonad fronting the house, of the Dorick order.'

with the vision of the colonnade that fronted me. It seemed one of those edifices in fairy tales that are raised by genii in a night's time.'[639]

It thus seems that Juliana embraced her role as an architectural patron, her creative vision for the house apparently triumphing over any obligation she might have felt to abide by the injunction on intermeddling contained in the 1st Earl's will. Timothy Mowl has suggested that Juliana's preference for the Baroque style 'pitched [her son] headlong into an architectural confusion over the exterior of his London town house'. The young earl therefore broke away from his mother's influence by commissioning Colen Campbell, rather than Gibbs, to design a new Palladian entrance front to the house around 1717.[640] However, I would suggest a more positive interpretation of their relationship. Indeed, it seems likely that Juliana inspired her son's passion for architectural experimentation. She is listed as a subscriber to the earliest instalment of Giacomo Leoni's edition of Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture*, published in 1715, raising the possibility that the Countess's interest in Palladio pre-dated her son's.[641] Furthermore, in addition to overseeing these various decorative and architectural improvements, Juliana played a crucial role in establishing the reputation of Burlington House as a hub of artistic creativity. In particular, she is known to have been a keen music lover and, under her patronage, the building became

[639] H. Walpole and G. Vertue, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 4 vols (Strawberry Hill, 1762), vol.4, p.109.

[640] Mowl, *William Kent*, p.79. Scholars disagree on the precise date of Campbell's employment at Burlington House. David Watkin proffers a date as late as 1719, whilst Nicholas Savage dates his involvement from 1717. D. Watkin, *English Architecture: A Concise History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), p.126; Savage, *Burlington House*, p.59.

[641] G. Leoni, *The Architecture of A. Palladio in Four Books* (London, 1715).

something of a 'headquarters for Italian Opera.'[642] George Frederick Handel is believed to have taken up residence in Burlington House at the Countess's invitation in 1713, remaining until his departure for Hanover in July 1716.[643] Juliana even arranged private performances of his work there, as for example in 1714, when she set up a private stage for a performance of his opera, *Silla*.[644] Moreover, it seems that Handel composed another of his operas, *Amadigi di Gaula*, at the house. This had its première at the Haymarket in London in 1715, and the theatre's impresario, John James Heidegger, significantly dedicated the libretto to the young Lord Burlington, arrived back from his foreign travels only two weeks previously; 'this opera more immediately claims Your Protection, as it is compos'd in Your own Family.'[645]

Thus, in the years leading up to 1715, it seems that Juliana had, quite literally, prepared the ground for her son's subsequent reputation as a leading patron of the arts – a reputation which the Earl keenly developed. Indeed, the following year, the poet and satirist, John Gay, who had recently joined Burlington's artistic coterie, paid tribute to the house's stimulating artistic environment:

> Yet Burlington's fair palace still remains;
> Beauty within, without proportion reigns.
> Beneath his eye declining art revives,
> The Wall with animated picture lives;
> There Handel strikes the strings, the melting strain
> Transports the soul, and thrills through every vein;

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[642] G. Knox, 'Sebastiano Ricci at Burlington House: A Venetian decoration "Alla Romana"', *The Burlington Magazine*, 127:990 (1985), p.606.

[643] *Ibid.*

[644] M. Foss, *The Art of Patronage: The Arts in Society 1660-1750*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), p.133.

[645] Quoted in T. McGeary, 'Handel and Homosexuality: Burlington House and Canons Revisited', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 136:1 (2011), p.39.

There oft I enter (but with cleaner shoes)
For Burlington's beloved by every muse.[646]

After reaching his majority, the young Earl undertook two more foreign trips: a tour of Paris and Flanders in 1717, and a further tour of Italy in 1719, crucially taking in a detailed study of Palladio's villas in the Veneto. During these travels he befriended artists, sculptors and musicians, some of whom were invited to return with him to London. These included three Italian musicians, the sculptor, Giovanni Battista Guelfi, and, most notably, the painter, William Kent (*c.*1685-1748). They had all joined the artistic entourage of Burlington House by the end of 1719. This concentration of talented men has led some scholars to posit Burlington House as an all-male creative arcadia.[647] However, few, if any, acknowledge that there was still a strong female presence in the household during Richard's bachelorhood. Although Juliana relinquished control over the Burlington estates only a few months after her son returned from his Tour, it seems likely that she continued to live in Burlington House until he married Dorothy Savile in 1721.[648] It is also worth noting that the 3rd Earl had four sisters, all unmarried at the time he reached his majority, so they were still living with their mother (fig.4.7). Kent, in particular, appears to have enjoyed the company of Burlington's sister, Jane (who never married), as well as Juliana.[649] Indeed, on hearing of Burlington's engagement to Dorothy, Kent welcomed the development, writing to

[646] J. Gay, *Trivia Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, Book II [1716] (London, 1730), p.42.

[647] For example, John Harris commented that Kent's place in the Burlington household was 'a very special one, and there is no reason not to presume a close homosexual relationship'. J. Harris, *The Palladians* (London, 1981), p.18. See also D. Nokes, *John Gay: A Profession of Friendship* (Oxford, 1995), p.46.

[648] Wilson, *Elite Women in Ascendancy Ireland*, p.98.

[649] In his will, Kent left Lady Jane Boyle 'the picture of the Virgin Mary called John Bruges'. TNA PROB 11/761/245: Will of William Kent, 18 June 1748.

his former patron, Hugh Massingberd: 'So I hope ye vertu will grow stronger in our house and architecture well floresh more'.[650] He was not to be disappointed. Dorothy willingly assumed her mother-in-law's mantle as an artistic and literary hostess, such that Horace Walpole later remarked: 'She had no less attachment to the arts than her Lord'.[651]

Part 2: The Construction of Burlington Estate and its Notable Female Residents

This section will start with a brief overview of the construction of the estate itself, describing its architectural character and layout, and its relationship to Burlington House. It will then explore its female demographic, based on evidence collated from contemporary rate books and the *Survey of London* study of this area, published in 1963.[652] Following this, it will focus on the houses of various prominent women, contextualising their period of residence on the estate in relation to their status, family circumstances and stage in the life cycle.

As noted, the impulse to develop the land to the north of Burlington House appears to have been borne of financial necessity since, by 1717, the debts of the 3rd Earl had amounted to a figure in excess of £23,000.[653] The first streets to be created were developed between 1719 and 1723, their construction coinciding with the later stages of the remodelling of Burlington House by Campbell (fig.4.13). Although Lord

[650] Quoted in Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary*, p.393.

[651] Walpole and Vertue, *Anecdotes*, vol. 4, p.111.

[652] *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.390-429.

[653] Juliana had had the foresight on 8 April 1712 to renew the long-term lease of the Ten Acre Close, thereby extending her son's entitlement to the land to the year 1809. In 1718, Burlington successfully petitioned the House of Lords 'to free him from the restrictions in his father's will', enabling him to grant building leases on part of the Ten Acre plot, *SoL*, vols 31-32: pp.442-45.

Burlington did not attempt an architectonic coordination of the house and estate, he does seem to have taken advantage of the new project to experiment in applying Palladian principles to town house design. After Burlington House, the largest and most prominent property on the estate was Queensberry House, located on the corner of Old Burlington Street and Burlington Gardens (figs 4.14 and 4.15). Built by John Witt to the designs of Giacomo Leoni, this was the 'first Georgian street façade to have a major pilaster order'.[654] More specifically, opposite the carriage entrance to Queensberry House, on Old Burlington Street, were four terraced houses designed by Campbell, creating a clear link between the main house and the estate (figs 4.16 and 4.17). Finally, two further houses of architectural significance were numbers 29 and 30 Old Burlington Street. Both were designed by Lord Burlington himself, the garden front of number 29 closely based on an elevational drawing by Palladio (figs 4.18 and 4.19).

In considering the overall layout of the estate, Jacques Carré has drawn attention to its 'self-contained and inward-looking character', noting that it was poorly related to the neighbouring streets. Whilst it bordered on the garden of Burlington House to the south, there was no link with Conduit Street to the north.[655] However, it seems likely that this street pattern contributed to the estate's distinct identity, helping to forge a sense of community between its residents.[656] Unlike some of the contemporary residential developments in the West End, such as Grosvenor Square, where the houses overlooked the central garden, the Burlington estate was constrained by limited space and lacked a central focus. Consequently, the arrangement of the new

[654] H. Stuchbury, *Architecture of Colen Campbell* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967) p.39.

[655] Carré, 'Public and Private', pp.16-17.

[656] *Ibid.*

streets was carefully planned to avoid a sense of congestion. Building was limited to the west side of Cork Street, creating a broad rectangle of open space to the east, encompassing the gardens of Old Burlington Street (fig.4.4a). Careful attention was also paid to the termination of vistas looking northwards up Cork Street and Old Burlington Street. The former ended in the façade of 8 Clifford Street, framed by stone quoins, whilst the latter culminated in the elegant doorway of the Burlington Girls' School at the far end of Noel Street (figs 4.20 and 4.21). Burlington had provided the land for this charity school free of charge in 1719, commissioning Campbell to provide a design for its street front (fig.4.22).[657] Its architecture thus harmonised with the character of the estate, suggesting a correlation between the philanthropic function of the school and the values of the local residents. In his account of the Burlington neighbourhood, written in 1725, John Macky drew attention to the generosity of elite women in supporting the school.[658] Although no record identifying the individual benefactresses has survived, it seems probable that the female residents of the estate were included in their number, feeling it their Christian duty to support such a charitable institution located in the vicinity.

The eastern side of the Ten Acre Close was constructed from 1733 onwards. This resulted in the creation of Savile Street (1732-35), running parallel to Old Burlington Street, and, finally, New Burlington Street (1735-39), extending eastwards towards Swallow Street (figs 4.23 and 4.24). According to the *Daily Post*, the 'Pile of buildings' in Savile Street was constructed according to 'a Plan drawn by the Right Hon. the Earl of Burlington', indicating that he asserted a greater level of control over

[657] Burlington Girls' School, which opened in 1725, aimed to provide its female interns with the skills of 'Housewifery, as may prepare them to be good servants.' J. Downing, *Account of Several Workhouses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor* (London 1725).

[658] Macky, *Journey through England*, p.185.

this stage of the development.[659] Significantly, the building leases for both new streets also included a proviso that the façades should not be altered without permission.[660] In Savile Street, building was restricted to the east side, meaning that its properties overlooked the gardens of Old Burlington Street, whilst, in New Burlington Street, houses were constructed on both sides (fig.4.4a).

As already indicated, the Burlington estate had a significant proportion of female residents. This is highlighted in table 4.1, which shows the women ratepayers recorded as there between 1735 and 1740. During this five-year period, around twenty-five percent of listed ratepayers were female. There appears to have been a particularly high proportion of women ratepayers in Cork Street, interestingly, where the houses were relatively modest in size. For example, in 1737, nine out of eighteen names of residents recorded in Cork Street were female. Not surprisingly, most female ratepayers on the estate were wealthy widows, such as Mary Grey (née Tufton), dowager Countess of Harold (1701-85), who occupied the largest house in Clifford Street between 1723 and 1737, and Lady Elizabeth Folliott, widow of Henry, Lord Folliott, who lived at 12 Cork Street from 1722 until her death in 1742. The rate books also show that there were a number of unmarried women living on the estate in this period. These included ladies such as Lady Harriot Lumley, the unmarried sister of the Earl of Scarborough, and also Lavinia Fenton, a celebrated actress and mistress of the Duke of Bolton, who lived in two addresses on the Burlington estate between 1728 and 1734. Indeed, the majority of female residents in the area were not from titled families. Only thirteen out of the thirty-six women ratepayers listed here were titled, as opposed

[659] *Daily Post*, 12 March 1733.

[660] *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.442-55.

to twenty-four out of the twenty-nine women recorded as living in Grosvenor Square during the years 1720 to 1760.[661]

The most high-ranking female resident of the estate was Catherine Douglas (née Hyde), Duchess of Queensberry (1701-77) (fig.4.25). She and her husband, Charles Douglas, 3rd Duke of Queensberry (1698-1778), took up residence in the large house, which became known as Queensberry House, shortly after their marriage in 1720. Their joint residence here lasted over five decades, during which time they maintained a prominent presence in the neighbourhood (to be discussed below). The location and orientation of this house underscored its superior status and its special relationship with Burlington House since it was the only property to have a front overlooking the Earl's garden. A surviving contract between Queensberry and the builder, Witt, even reveals that its entrance hall was modelled on the Earl's, reinforcing the synchronicity between the two buildings.[662] Furthermore, over the ensuing years, the Duke and Duchess opened up their home to artists and literary figures, creating an environment which mirrored, or perhaps competed with, that of Burlington House. Based on this evidence, it seems likely that Burlington House acted as a defining force in the development of some of the new houses on the estate, both in terms of setting stylistic trends, but also as influencing the social and artistic character of the neighbourhood.

[661] Schlarman, 'Social Geography', p.19.

[662] BL Stowe MS 412: 'Practising Attorney or Conveyancer's Guide' (1738-39): Building Agreement of 1722 between Duke of Queensberry and John Witt. This contract specifies that the entrance hall is 'to be done in such manner as the Earl of Burlington's front Hall is already done'.

Table 4.1: Women ratepayers: Burlington estate, 1735 to 1740, taken from Westminster rate books for the Parish of St James's, Westminster: D424, D433, D439, D492 (City of Westminster archive)

Name	Address	Marital status if known	1735	1736	1737	1739	1740
Lady Mary Wearg	Old Burlington Street		✓				
Lady Elizabeth Wearg				✓	✓	✓	✓
Anne Lumley		widow	✓	✓			
Helena Collins			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Anne Britain		widow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lady Elizabeth Greener /Lady Elizabeth Granard?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mary Clliff			✓	✓	✓		
Sarah Osborn		widow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Madam Hill						✓	✓
Elizabeth Brown						✓	
Elizabeth Neville			✓	✓			
Charlotte Addison		single	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mary Reynolds				✓	✓	✓	✓
Rebecca Pay	Clifford Street		✓				
Lady Carolina Mountjoy			✓				
Lady Anne Mounjoy					✓	✓	✓
Mary, Countess of Harold		widow	✓	✓			
Catherine Dalkin			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anne Cooper				✓	✓	✓	
Lady Grenville		Widow					✓
Lady Hereford							✓
Harriot Jansen	Cork Street		✓	✓			
Anne Revit			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Jane Hamond		widow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Catherine Peterson			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lady Elizabeth Folliott		widow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lady Harriot Lumley		widow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anne Morris			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alithea Alison			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lady Giffard		widow			✓	✓	✓
Elizabeth Minshull					✓	✓	✓
Lady Elizabeth Ward	Savile Street		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eleanor Wahup			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elizabeth Elliott				✓	✓	✓	
Madam Perris		single					✓
Lady Bristoe	New Burlington Street					✓	

Some of the women resident on the estate took over or inherited a property initially intended for a close male relative due to sudden changes in family circumstances. Charlotte Addison (née Myddelton), the twice-widowed Countess of Warwick (1680-1731), for example, had originally signed the lease on 33 Old Burlington Street for her son from her first marriage, Edward Rich, the twenty-one-year-old Earl of Warwick, in 1720. However, following Edward's untimely death in August the following year, she moved into the house in his stead with her two-year-old daughter, also called Charlotte, from her second marriage to the celebrated writer, Joseph Addison (1672-1719). An inventory taken of the property in 1731, following the Countess's death, reveals that it was arranged over three main storeys linked by two staircases, with extensive servants quarters in the basement.[663] Its principal reception rooms included a drawing room and dining room, the latter adorned with history paintings, and a front parlour containing a harpsichord. As well as having been married to Addison, it seems that the Countess was herself a bibliophile, since one of the rooms functioned as a library.[664] The house was subsequently inherited by their daughter, who retained ownership of the property until 1747.

Mary, Countess of Harold, also became the principal owner of her property due to unforeseen circumstances. In 1721, Mary and her new husband, the twenty-five-year-old Earl of Harold, had taken up residence in the largest five-bay house in Clifford Street: number 9 (fig.4.26). However, when the Earl died only two years later

[663] BL Egerton MS 1973: 'An Inventory of the Household Goods of the Right Hon Countess of Warwick Deceased taken at her Late Dwelling House in Burlington Street', 19 July 1731.

[664] Like Juliana, the dowager Countess of Burlington, the Countess of Warwick also had an engraving dedicated to her in Jacob Tonson's 1717 edition of Ovid's Metamorphoses. Tonson, *Ovid's Metamorphoses,* Plate to Book 5.

from ‘an inflamation in his Throat’, he left the property to his young widow.[665] Mary continued to live in Clifford Street until her second marriage to John Leveson-Gower, 1st Earl Gower, in May 1736, when she moved to the latter’s house in Upper Brook Street.[666] Her willingness to relinquish both her own London home and her position of financial independence for the sake of remarriage to Lord Gower was judged unwise by some of her contemporaries, including Mary Delany: ‘everybody thinks him a very lucky man to get a woman of her understanding and fortune. I can’t but call her sense in question to engage with a man so encumbered with children, but love removes great obstacles.’[667] The Countess’s house in Clifford Street is one of the few properties to have survived on the estate, seemingly without any major structural alterations. Its most striking feature is the richly carved staircase, to the left of the entrance hall, where a single flight of steps rises to a half-landing before branching into two separate flights (figs 4.27 and 4.28).

Another two widows, Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk (1689-1767), and Anne Ingram, Viscountess Irwin (1696-1764), purchased property in the new streets during the second stage of the development (figs 4.29 and 4.30). In contrast to the Countesses of Warwick and Harold, Henrietta and Anne were both involved in decisions regarding the building and finishing of their houses. Henrietta purchased 15

[665] *British Journal*, 27 July 1723.

[666] *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.466-82: In 1737, Lord and Lady Gower assigned the lease on 9 Clifford Street to Sir Jacob des Bouverie.

[667] Llanover, *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville*, vol.1, p.557. Letter to Anne Granville, May 1736. From his first two marriages, Lord Gower already had twelve children. Mary was accorded a life interest in the house in Upper Brook Street on Lord Gower’s death in 1754. *SoL*, vol.40, 200-10.

Savile Street for £2500 from the builders Gray and Fortnam in February 1735.[668] According to the *Survey of London*, she commissioned the architect Roger Morris, and her close friend, Lord Pembroke, to design some of the external features of the property.[669] Morris and Lord Pembroke (whose disputatious relationship with the Countess of Portland was discussed in the previous chapter), had also collaborated over the design of Henrietta's suburban villa at Marble Hill, Twickenham (1724-29).[670] Thus, in common with other elite women, Henrietta looked to her own social circle when seeking assistance with architectural projects. Furthermore, like the Duchess of Norfolk, she employed the same architect to work on her town house and her suburban villa.[671]

To design the layout and decoration of her house in New Burlington Street, Lady Irwin employed Nicholas Hawksmoor, who had carried out several commissions for her father, Charles Howard, 3rd Earl of Carlisle (*c*.1669-1738), at Castle Howard. This may seem a surprising choice, especially since Hawksmoor had notoriously come into conflict with Lord Burlington over his design for the mausoleum at Castle Howard.[672] Most likely, Anne felt she could trust her father's architect, a man who had

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[668] Norfolk Record Office (NRO) 21140 75X3: Papers relating to an house in Savile Street: Receipt from William Gray, 12 February 1734/5.

[669] 'At no. 15 […] some "allowances" to be made by Gray in his bill for finishing the house were certified in January 1735/6 by Roger Morris.' *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.517-45.

[670] NRO 21140 75X3: Receipt from William Gray, 12 February 1734/5: 'I promise to deliver and finished according to an article signed and delivered to the Earl of Pembroke'. There is no surviving evidence to show that either Morris or Pembroke were involved in designing the interior of the house.

[671] See chapter 2. James Gibbs was employed both at 16 Arlington Street and to make alterations to Corney House, Chiswick.

[672] See C. Saumarez Smith, *Building of Castle Howard* (London: Pimlico, 1997), p.179. Lord Burlington had notoriously pointed out that there was no antique precedent for the intercolumniation which Hawksmoor proposed for the Mausoleum, since it was a circular, not a square building.

gained a reputation as being a perfectionist in overseeing his building projects.[673] A surviving conveyancer's formulary-book provides an illuminating source regarding his involvement.[674] Amounting to twelve pages, this document clearly states that the 'form and manner' of the house's façade must be 'conformable to the other fronts in the […] street' as agreed with the Earl of Burlington.[675] However, it also sets out requirements relating to the work of the builders and craftsmen, all of which was to be executed either 'according to a design by' or 'with the approbation of' Hawksmoor. It reveals that the house's two principal levels, the 'salon' and 'bedchamber' storeys, were connected by a central toplit staircase with fifty-six steps of Portland stone and an iron handrail featuring 'scrowl work' designed by Hawksmoor.[676] It appears that there were only two reception rooms in the house which were both located on the ground floor: a parlour with a twelve-foot high ceiling at the front of the house, and a salon with a fourteen-foot high ceiling and a large bay window overlooking the garden at the back.[677] The rest of the house was chiefly devoted to bedroom accommodation, suggesting that Lady Irwin often invited friends or family members to stay with her. The contract also reveals the careful attention Hawksmoor paid to practical aspects of the design. For example, the thickness of the kitchen ceiling in the basement had to be

[673] Saumarez Smith, *Building of Castle Howard*, p.156.

[674] BL Stowe MS 412: 'The Practising Attorney or Conveyancer's Guide…[etc.]', (1738-39), no.90. This booklet claimed to contain a 'compleat collection of the best modern Presidents [precedents] for ye greatest part of the Conveying Business'. It includes a full transcript of the articles of agreement between Lady Irwin, the builders, Gray and Fortnam, as well as a transcription of the agreement with Thomas Knight the carpenter and joiner. See also *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.490-95.

[675] BL Stowe MS 412, f.110.

[676] *Ibid.*, f.111.

[677] *Ibid.*, f.110

'thicker than common in order to keep the steam, smell of the rooms below from offending the rooms above.'[678]

Unfortunately, Hawksmoor's death in 1736 prevented him from seeing the project through to its completion. Consequently, when the head joiner, Thomas Knight, was declared bankrupt, Lady Irwin confessed to being 'under a good deal of uneasiness how to proceed in the finishing [of her] House.'[679] Finding herself in a position of financial strain, she was obliged to request a loan from her father, showing a lingering reliance on her natal family: 'I should be much oblig'd to you if you woud allow yt 500 l to be taken from ye bond I have of yours […] I will pay your Lordship very soon'.[680] However, later in the same letter, she also notes her excitement about her near-completed residence:

> my House is now within a few weeks of being finish'd and I think a pretty House it will prove of the size: I have executed the ceiling I brought from Castle Howard drawn by your Italian & it looks very magnificent & fine, and is allow'd by those yt have seen it to be as handsome a ceiling as is in town.[681]

As this letter indicates, the house was not large, measuring only thirty-one feet in width by fifty-five feet in depth. However, Lady Irwin was evidently satisfied with its design and relished the opportunity to incorporate artwork of her own choosing into the décor. It seems likely that the painted ceiling, referred to in her letter, adorned the

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[678] *Ibid.*

[679] Castle Howard MSS, J8/1/248: Lady Irwin to Earl of Carlisle, 5 February [1737].

[680] *Ibid.*

[681] *Ibid*. The identity of the 'Italian' is not clear although it could refer to Pellegrini who executed many of the decorative paintings at Castle Howard as well as a portrait of Lady Irwin and her two sisters displayed there. If so, this would also have provided a visual link with Pellegrini's paintings in the hallway at Burlington House.

salon, since this was the largest reception room, making it an impressive space for entertaining.

As noted above, remarriage would affect women's ownership of a town house. Whilst the Countess of Suffolk and Lady Irwin were widows when they first came to live on the estate, they both remarried during their first year of residence. Indeed, it seems likely that their presence in this fashionable quarter of the West End brought them into social contact with prospective marriage partners.[682] The former married the politician, George Berkeley, in June 1735, whilst the latter married Colonel William Douglas, a member of Prince Frederick's household and 'a near relation to the Duke of Queensberry', in June 1737. Following their second marriages, both women appear to have deferred to their husbands' legal authority over their properties, since the rate books then list Berkeley and Douglas as principal householders. However, it is significant that neither of these women moved out of their houses as a result of remarrying. Their situation thus contrasts with that of the Countess of Harold, who gave up her house in Clifford Street following her marriage to Lord Gower. The most likely explanation for this is that both Henrietta and Anne were in a stronger position financially than their second husbands, since there is no record of either Berkeley or Douglas owning their own London property at the time of their marriages. Furthermore, both women were to be widowed a second time, with the consequence that they later resumed their status as principal householders for their remaining lives (Lady Irwin died in 1764; the Countess of Suffolk in 1767).[683]

[682] See Stewart, *Town House*, p.33.

[683] George Berkeley died on 29 October 1746 and Colonel Douglas died in 1747.

Part 3: Court Connections

Like the Whitehall neighbourhood, the Burlington estate was located only a few hundred yards from St James's Palace. Consequently, it provided a convenient place of residence for those employed at the royal court. However, unlike Whitehall's inhabitants, residents of the Burlington estate were not subject to the crown lease system, so were less reliant on royal favour. Moreover, many of them were united by an interest in art, architecture and literature, and this appears to have contributed to the independent character of the community. This section begins by examining the relationship between the occupants of Burlington House and the royal court. It then explores how various members of the Burlington circle responded to the rift between George II and his heir, Prince Frederick, many of them choosing to associate with the rebellious prince rather than the King.

As noted above, Juliana, the 3rd Earl's mother, had served as one of Queen Anne's ladies of the bedchamber. Her daughter-in-law, Dorothy, was also awarded an elevated position at court when she was appointed Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Caroline in 1727. As revealed in a letter to her husband, Dorothy took advantage of her position to promote the careers of Kent and Guelfi, both resident at Burlington House, by acting as an intermediary between these artists and the Queen:

> I was at Court yesterday with a vast Crowd, […] pray let the Signor [i.e. Kent] know yt his Ma[jes]ty was yesterday full of Comendations of ye two pictures […] The Queen promis'd to send ye 4 pictures to Guelphi, this morning & I

> have given him yt which came from Mrs Clark, of which I believe ye Queen's is only a Copy.[684]

Thanks to the support of Lord and Lady Burlington, Kent got to carry out extensive architectural commissions for Queen Caroline including two garden buildings, the Hermitage (1731) and Merlin's Cave (1735), in the grounds of Richmond Lodge, as well as designing her new library at Kensington Palace in 1737. Meanwhile, Guelfi was commissioned to sculpt five portrait busts for display in the Hermitage in 1731.[685] Lady Burlington's position at court also provided her with opportunities to pursue her own artistic talent, since Queen Caroline granted her permission to copy portraits in the Royal Collection.[686] When George Vertue visited Burlington House in 1743, he described how its 'great room' was adorned with several of Lady Burlington's crayon portraits, 'mostly all of them Coppyd from excellent pictures'.[687] Not only did the display of these works draw attention to Dorothy's artistic skill, but they also provided enduring evidence of her privileged status within the royal household.[688]

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[684] BL Althorp Papers Add MS 75358: Lady Burlington to Lord Burlington, 2 January 1730/31. The 4 pictures referred to were intended to assist Guelfi in designing the portrait busts for the Hermitage referred to below.

[685] Jenkins, 'Lady Burlington at Court', p.149.

[686] J. Egerton, 'Boyle [née Savile], Dorothy, Countess of Burlington (1699-1758), *ODNB*. One of Dorothy's drawings was included in the picture closet at Kensington Palace and she made the last portrait of Caroline on her deathbed in 1737. See J. Marschner, *Queen Caroline: Cultural Politics at the Early Eighteenth-Century Court* (New Haven and London, 2014), pp.109-10.

[687] G. Vertue, *The Note Books of George Vertue…[etc]*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1930-55), vol.3, p.140. Dorothy is known to have taken lessons from the watercolourist and etcher, Joseph Goupy, who lived in Savile Street between 1737 and 1747. Egerton, 'Boyle [née Savile], Dorothy, Countess of Burlington'. See also M. De Novelis, *Pallas Unveil'd - The Life and Art of Lady Dorothy Savile, Countess of Burlington (1699-1758)* (London, 1999).

[688] Dorothy ceased to be a royal courtier after Queen Caroline's death in 1737.

However, the relationship between Queen Caroline and Lady Burlington had come under strain when Lord Burlington resigned from his court posts on 3 May 1733, going into Opposition as a Tory. Burlington had allegedly been angered by the King's failure to honour a promise to award him 'the first white staff', a high household office. Many expected Lady Burlington to follow her husband's example and resign from the royal service.[689] Despite this, she appears to have successfully navigated her position, continuing as a Lady of the Bedchamber despite this turn of events. As noted by Susan Jenkins, from this date onwards, Burlington relied on his wife to keep him informed of news from the court.[690] For example, Dorothy gave him a full account of the events leading to Prince Frederick's banishment from court in August 1737 after he smuggled his heavily pregnant wife out of Hampton Court Palace, 'risquing her life as well as the Child's', so that she could give birth in St James's Palace.[691]

Even before the scandal of Princess Augusta's labour, the acrimonious relationship between George II and his heir, Prince Frederick, had effectively led to the division of royal power into two rival centres. Having spent his formative years in Hanover, Frederick had arrived in England in 1728 'under a cloud of parental disapproval'.[692] He had, however, been welcomed by various residents of the Burlington estate. During his time on the continent, the Prince had acquired a considerable knowledge of art, architecture and design, which is likely to have

[689] HMC *Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle,* p.114: Charles Howard to Lord Carlisle, 8 May 1733: 'Lady Burlington has not yet left the Queen's service, but everybody takes for granted that will follow'.

[690] Jenkins, 'Lady Burlington at Court', p.162.

[691] BL Althorp Papers Add MS 75358: Lady Burlington to Lord Burlington, n.d. [August 1737].

[692] C. Gerrard, 'Queens-in-waiting: Caroline of Anspach and Augusta of Saxe-Gotha as Princess of Wales', Campbell Orr, *Queenship in Britain*, p.151. This rift was initially caused by Frederick's secret attempts to elope with the Prussian Princess Sophia.

attracted him to Lord Burlington and his associates.[693] According to Mary Delany, he had been entertained by 'a ball and supper' at both Queensberry House and Burlington House on consecutive weeks .[694] Frederick was also a close friend of the Herveys, who lived at 31 Old Burlington Street.[695] When Lady Hervey gave birth to a son in September 1730, the child, also named Frederick, had been baptised at their house in Old Burlington Street with the Prince of Wales standing as godfather.[696] Frederick's relationship with Lord Burlington was further strengthened through his purchase of Carlton House on Pall Mall from Juliana, the dowager Countess, in 1732.[697] The Prince subsequently commissioned Burlington and his protégé, Henry Flitcroft, to design a new façade for the house. Its construction was supervised by William Kent, who also designed the new gardens. It is surely notable that Burlington's collaboration with Frederick coincided with his resignation from his court posts, making it reasonable to conjecture that he was courting the Prince's favour, leaving his wife to maintain a relationship with the King and Queen. This tactic ensured that the couple were connected to both centres of royal power.

Throughout the 1730s, Prince Frederick's relationship with his parents continued to decline, exacerbated by arguments over his financial allowance, and the

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[693] D. Coombs, 'The Garden at Carlton House of Frederick, Prince of Wales and Augusta, Princess Dowager of Wales. Bills in their Household Accounts 1728 to 1772', *Garden History* , 25: 2 (Winter, 1997), p.154.

[694] Llanover, *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville,* vol 1, p.187: Letter to Anne Grenville, 10 February 1728/9.

[695] Lord Hervey had been an associate of the Prince during their time in Hanover together.

[696] *London Evening Post*, 3-5 September 1730.

[697] This property, located to the east of Marlborough House, had originally been built for Burlington's uncle, Henry Boyle, Baron Carleton in 1709, but had been inherited by Burlington after Henry's death in 1725. The Earl initially handed it over to his mother, Juliana, but she disposed of it almost immediately to the Earl of Chesterfield in trust for Prince Frederick. Rorschach, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales', p.22; Marschner, *Queen Caroline,* p.68.

delay in finding him a suitable bride. When his marriage was finally arranged to Augusta in 1736, Queen Caroline took it upon herself to select the ladies of the bedchamber for her prospective daughter-in-law. One of these was Anne, Lady Irwin, who was given the important responsibility of meeting Augusta in Holland in April 1736, so that she could accompany her on the voyage to Greenwich to meet her new husband.[698] Lady Irwin's royal appointment coincided with the construction of her house in New Burlington Street, providing a convenient base from which to perform her royal duties. Her role was initially complicated by the hostility of Frederick, who resented the fact that she had been appointed by his mother. Writing to her father in May 1736, Lady Irwin commented: 'I find we've an uphill game to play; we are all come in without the consent of the Prince and consequently not with his inclination.'[699] However, it seems that she soon succeeded in winning the trust of both Frederick and Augusta. In October of the following year, she wrote to her father, praising the Prince and Princess for 'wholly conversing with their servants', and allowing them 'to share all their diversions'.[700]

Like the Whitehall neighbourhood, the Burlington estate accommodated a number of retired female courtiers. Abigail Masham, who had succeeded the Duchess of Marlborough in Queen Anne's affections, occupied a house in Cork Street with her husband, and she is recorded as dying there in December 1734.[701] However, in *contrast* to the Whitehall neighbourhood, where retired courtiers tended to maintain a close relationship with the palace, a significant number of residents on the Burlington estate were no longer welcomed at court. One such example was Lady Mary Hervey

[698] *London Evening Post*, 15-17 April 1736.

[699] HMC, *Carlisle*, p.171: Lady Irwin to Earl of Carlisle, 4 May 1736.

[700] *Ibid.*, 30 October 1737, p.188.

[701] *London Evening Post*, 5-7 December 1734.

(née Lepel) (1699/1700-68), who had previously served as a maid of honour to Caroline whilst Princess of Wales but had gone to live with her growing family in Old Burlington Street in 1725. According to the Duchess of Marlborough, Lady Mary had upset George I's mistress, the Duchess of Kendal, by 'flirting aggressively' with the King. To pacify the wounded Duchess, and restore peace in the royal household, the Ministry had allegedly agreed to 'buy her [Mary] off' with £4000, thereby facilitating the purchase of her town house on the Burlington estate.[702]

Perhaps the most notorious example of a noblewoman falling from favour at court was when Catherine, Duchess of Queensberry, set herself up as the champion of the satirist, John Gay. As Mary Delany related to her sister in 1729; 'the duchess to the great amazement of the admiring world, is forbid the court, only for being solicitous in getting a subscription for Mr Gay's sequel of the Beggar's Opera.'[703] Delany described the episode as 'a thing never heard of before to one of her rank', evidently believing that the Duchess's pedigree should have protected her from such treatment.[704] Gay's career as a writer had benefited from the new liberal culture then thriving in London's commercial spaces outside the influence of the court.[705] However, the King evidently perceived the popularity of his works as a significant threat to his own authority. The playwright's fall from grace at court also resulted in him losing his apartment in

[702] See M. Kilburn, 'Hervey [née Lepell], Lady Hervey of Ickworth (1699/1700-1768)', *ODNB* (2004), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13118

[703] Llanover, *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville*, vol.1, p.194: Letter to Anne Grenville, 4 May 1729. John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728) had satirised the corruption in Robert Walpole's government.

[704] *Ibid*.

[705] As noted by John Brewer, 'the arts became more commercial and less courtly because they became more urban.' Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, p.3.

Whitehall (which he had acquired as Commissioner of the Lotteries).[706] Gay subsequently came under the protection of the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, who invited him to live with them in Queensberry House (to be discussed below).

Furthermore, over the next few years, the Duchess of Queensberry appears to have consciously fashioned a style of dress directly opposed to the ostentatiously embroidered and bejewelled costumes of the Hanoverian court.[707] In July 1733, for example, her neighbour, Lady Burlington, reported wryly to her husband that the Duchess had dined 'with Will Finch (in Company with the Prince of Orange) in a white apron & a nightcap' (fig.4.25).[708] However, the Duchess's popularity in high society appears to have suffered little from her rift with the King. As noted by De Pollnitz, the travel writer, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry 'were seen as public Abroad as ever, and received Abundance of Visits at Home', prompting him to conclude: 'In short, a Man is only shunn'd here for being a Criminal or a Coward.'[709]

Another example of a lady out of royal favour, resident on the Burlington estate, was that of Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk, George II's erstwhile mistress, who retired from her position as mistress of the robes to Queen Caroline in November 1734. According to Lord Hervey, the King was wearied by her 'perpetual contradiction' and 'constant opposition to all his measures.'[710] The Queen, too, allegedly had cause to be aggrieved with Henrietta. During her incumbency as royal mistress, she had effectively established a rival intellectual circle to that of Caroline,

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[706] Nokes, *John Gay*, p.334.

[707] For information on women's court clothing, see Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.115.

[708] BL Althorp Papers Add MS 75358: Lady Burlington to Lord Burlington, 25 July 1733.

[709] De Pollnitz, *Memoirs*, p.444.

[710] Lord Hervey, *Some materials towards memoirs of the reign of King George II*, 2 vols, ed. R. Sedgwick (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1931), vol.2, p.382.

drawing the likes of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift away from the Queen's gatherings to parties held in her own apartments at St James's Palace.[711] Consequently, Henrietta's acquisition of a house in Savile Street, in February 1735, could be seen as compensating for the loss of those rooms. Here, she had the opportunity to join a vibrant community, centred on the artistic and literary life of Burlington House and Queensberry House, but operating entirely independently from the royal court.

Part 4: Kinship and Friendship

In contrast to Whitehall, where certain aristocratic families could claim strong ties to the site dating back to the reign of Charles II, the Burlington estate lacked historical associations. However, despite the lack of linear associations, *extended* kinship networks still appear to have played an important role in binding this community together. Naomi Tadmor has observed that the contemporary language of kinship promoted 'the construction of complex and dense networks of kin' which could be projected onto geographical areas or neighbourhoods.[712] Friendship, too, operated as a significant social force in the locality, often overlapping with kinship connections. Whilst some residents were attracted to the estate because of existing friendships, many also forged new bonds after moving there. The following section explores some of these familial and social networks, paying particular attention to the role of women in strengthening these ties.

Some of the more prominent residents in the new development were closely connected to the Earl and Countess of Burlington themselves. Charles, Duke of

[711] Marschner, *Queen Caroline*, p.130.

[712] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p.166.

Queensberry, for example, was a first cousin of Lord Burlington through his mother, Mary Boyle. His wife, Catherine, was also related to the Burlington family, as the granddaughter of Henrietta Boyle, aunt of the 2nd Earl of Burlington (fig.4.7). However, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu hinted at an even closer blood tie between the Duchess and Lord Burlington, insinuating in her correspondence that Catherine was the illegitimate daughter of Henry Boyle, Burlington's uncle.[713] Also related to both the Burlingtons and the Queensberrys were William and Anne Finch, who took up residence in Savile Street in 1735.[714] William was a half-uncle to Lady Burlington, whilst his wife, Anne (née Douglas), was a sister of the Duke of Queensberry. Meanwhile, Mary, Countess of Harold, who lived at 9 Clifford Street, was linked to the Burlingtons through ties of both kinship and friendship. Her sister, Margaret, was the wife of Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester, a leading patron of the arts and a close associate of Burlington and Kent with whom he had collaborated in the remodelling of Holkham Hall.[715] Consequently, it seems that the familial and social networks of Lord and Lady Burlington played a key role in shaping the demographic of the new estate. Indications are that this resulted in a community composed of trusted individuals, connected by bonds of familial obligation but also by shared artistic interests.[716]

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[713] See for example, Lord Wharncliffe, ed. *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (London, 1893), vol. 1, p.485: Letter to Countess of Mar, March/April 1725: 'My Lord Carleton has left this transitory world, and disposed of his estate as he did of his time, between Lady Clarendon and the Duchess of Queensberry.'

[714] William was the fourth son of Daniel Finch, Lady Burlington's grandfather.

[715] Margaret later became an important architectural patron in her own right, overseeing the completion of Holkham Hall after her husband died in 1759. See A. Boyington, 'The Countess of Leicester and Her Contribution to Holkham Hall', *Georgian Group Journal*, 22 (2014), pp.53-66.

[716] See J. Stobart, 'Social and geographical contexts of property transmission in the eighteenth century', in J. Stobart and A. Owens, eds, *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.108.

Catherine, Duchess of Queensberry, one of the most prominent residents of the estate, often hosted lively parties which are likely to have included many of her elite neighbours. During the 1740s, she set up a small stage at Queensberry House for the purpose of hosting amateur theatricals. These included performances of Edward Young's *The Revenge* and Thomas Otway's *The Orphan or the Unhappy Marriage*.[717] According to Lady Louisa Stuart, the plays were performed by various siblings and cousins, 'bred up together since childhood', including the sisters, Lady Caroline Dalkeith and Lady Betty Mackenzie, and their cousin, John, Earl of Bute.[718] The Duchess did not act herself but assumed a directorial role, 'indefatigably managing, prompting, and overlooking the whole'.[719] Such was the success of these events that Prince Frederick asked the Duchess to arrange an additional performance of *The Revenge* to a select audience, including himself, Augusta and a group of their friends, further underscoring his connection with the neighbourhood.

Catherine also built lasting friendships with some of her female neighbours. As noted by Amanda Herbert, 'the ability to relate to others, and especially to other women' was considered an essential component of 'modern female identity' during this period.[720] The Duchess was especially fond of her neighbour, Mary, Countess of Harold, describing her as having 'a mighty good heart, and a very good

[717] J. A. Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart: Selections from her Manuscripts* (Edinburgh, 1899), pp.38-39. See also Haugen 'The Mimic Stage: Private Theatricals in Georgian Britain', p.137.

[718] Lady Caroline Dalkeith and Lady Betty Mackenzie were both daughters of John Campbell, 2nd Earl of Argylle. Another of their sisters, Anne Wentworth, Lady Strafford, is discussed in chapter 5.

[719] Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart*, p.39.

[720] A. Herbert, *Female Alliances: Gender, Identity, and Friendship in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven and London: 2014), p.13.

understanding'.[721] Later, in 1736, Mary married Catherine's first cousin, Lord Gower, and it seems likely that the Duchess both introduced the couple and encouraged their courtship. Catherine also enjoyed a lively correspondence with Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk, especially since they were both friends of the writer, John Gay. After Henrietta retired from court in 1734, Catherine wrote expressing her regret at being unable to accommodate her in Queensberry House: 'I am heartily sorry that our house is at present engaged, or it would have been entirely at your service; but I hope you will soon meet with one to your own mind.'[722] It seems probable that Henrietta's decision to buy a house in Savile Street in 1735 was influenced by their friendship. Finally, Catherine also found a kindred political spirit in her neighbour, Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-91), who resided at 2 Savile Street between 1734 and 1740. In March 1739, they both took part in a protest at Westminster, united in their indignation over the decision to exclude women from the public gallery of the House of Lords. After staging an eight-hour siege outside the doors of the chamber, the women, led by the Duchess, stormed in, 'pushed aside their competitors and placed themselves in the front rows of the gallery.'[723]

It is also worth drawing attention to the network of relationships connecting the occupants of Campbell's terraced houses in Old Burlington Street since it reveals the important role played by women in creating and sustaining such ties. In 1719, Richard Arundell (*c.*1696-1758*)*, a close friend of Lord Burlington, was granted a lease on 34

[721] Croker, *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk*, vol. 1, p.395: Letter from the Duchess of Queensberry, 17 November 1730.

[722] Croker, *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk*, vol. 2, p.124: Letter from the Duchess of Queensberry, November 1734.

[723] Wharncliffe, *Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol.2, p.38: Letter to the Countess of Pomfret, March 1739.

Old Burlington Street on a rent-free basis (fig.4.16).[724] Between 1721 and 1731, his neighbour, at 33 Old Burlington Street, was Charlotte Addison, the dowager Countess of Warwick. Charlotte had enjoyed a close friendship with Richard's mother, the Countess of Pembroke, and she appears to have forged a familial style bond with her young neighbour after that friend died in 1721. This is demonstrated by her will, in which she made Richard and his heirs remainder beneficiaries 'as a mark of the friendship and esteem' she had for Lady Pembroke.[725] Meanwhile, in 1722, another of Arundell's friends, the politician, Henry Pelham (1694-1754), had taken up residence in 32 Old Burlington Street. These two men later became related through their marriage to two sisters. Henry married Katherine Manners in 1726, whilst Richard married her sister, Frances, in 1732. It seems likely that Arundell's courtship of Frances was encouraged by the Pelhams who would have had ample opportunity to bring the couple together during their periods of residence in London. As noted by Amy Harris, siblings frequently adopted the role of matchmakers or intermediaries between couples as a way of ensuring that a potential in-law was compatible with their family's social position.[726] Although Pelham's appointment as Paymaster of the Forces meant that he and his wife moved to an official residence in the Horse Guards at the end of 1732, their house in Old Burlington Street was taken by another of Katherine and Frances's siblings, William Manners, who remained there until his death in 1774.[727] Meanwhile, in 1748, the Arundells moved to 29 Old Burlington Street, the grand Palladian townhouse designed by Lord Burlington (figs 4.18 and 4.19). When

[724] *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.495-517.

[725] TNA PROB 11/646/60 Will of Charlotte, Countess of Warwick, 28 July 1731.

[726] Harris, *Siblinghood and social relations*, p.130.

[727] N. Thompson, 'The Pelhams: Political and Architectural Patronage', Campbell, *A House in Town: 22 Arlington Street*, p.83.

Richard Arundell died in 1758, his widow remained in the house until her own death in 1769.

Another close friend of Lord Burlington's was Bryan Fairfax, Commissioner of Customs to George II, who took up residence at 1 Savile Street in 1733, remaining there until his death in 1749.[728] Soon afterwards, his brother, Fernando (commonly referred to as Nando), came to live with him in the house. The two bachelors were particularly welcomed by the female members of the Burlington household. Lady Burlington often referred to their visits in her correspondence, describing Fernando playing cribbage with her daughter, Charlotte, and later supping with her sister-in-law, Lady Jane.[729] As this evidence suggests, the enmeshed patterns of kinship and friendship linking residents on the estate prospered during this period, helping to create an elite community which was both sociable and supportive. As the following section will show, these networks were also interwoven and co-dependent on the various artists and writers associated with the neighbourhood, many of whom benefited from patronage there.

Part 5: Patronage and the Burlington Estate

Building on the model of hospitable patronage practised by Juliana, the dowager Countess, the 3rd Earl and his wife, Dorothy, fostered an environment at Burlington House in which patron and artist could cohabit in a condition of friendship which was, in spirit at least, egalitarian. Commenting in 1962 on the relationship which aristocrats

[728] Fairfax was granted his lease rent-free during Burlington's lifetime. See *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.517-45.
[729] BL Add MS 75358, Lady Burlington to Lord Burlington, 6 November [1731]; Same to same, 23 September 1735.

like Lord Burlington enjoyed with some of their protégés, James Lees-Milne wrote: 'They […] treated them almost as social equals, even deferred to them as to their intellectual and artistic superiors'.[730] More recently, Dustin Griffin has stressed the continuing significance of hospitality in relation to eighteenth-century patronage. Adopting a more measured tone than Lees-Milne, he has noted how co-residence with aristocratic patrons permitted certain talented individuals 'to cross a line, under controlled conditions, that normally separates the ranks of a hierarchical society.'[731] However, few scholars have explored the specific role of women in relation to artistic and literary patronage in the Burlington circle. Indeed, as noted above, many scholars have framed this elite group as a very homosocial space. It will be argued here, conversely, that women, with more leisure time at their disposal, were in a particularly advantageous position when it came to forging close friendships with writers and artists in the domestic setting of the town house. The following section will explore the nature of some of these relationships, focusing first on those between women and architects, and secondly between women and writers.

Soon after her marriage in 1721, Dorothy, Lady Burlington appears to have developed a close rapport with William Kent, to whom she affectionately referred as 'the signor'. Their relationship was not only one of mutual affection, but also of artistic productivity. The latter's sketch of the Countess, seated at her easel, suggests that they often worked in each other's company. As noted by Judy Egerton, they even adopted a similar energetic style in their pen and ink drawings (fig.4.31).[732] Kent's full integration into the social and domestic life of the Burlingtons is evident from the

[730] J. Lees-Milne, *Earls of Creation* (London: Century Hutchinson, 1986), p.xi.

[731] D. Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.19.

[732] Egerton, 'Boyle [née Savile], Dorothy, countess of Burlington'.

letters he exchanged with both husband and wife during the 1730s and 40s. For example, in December 1738, he wrote a lively letter to Dorothy from Burlington House, humorously acknowledging his own tendency towards self-indulgence: 'I have had but one feast in my room since you went, but I can assure you, was drank fourteen bottles of wine in one sitting and neither I nor company was sick or sorry for the next day.'[733] He goes on to impart various snippets of gossip relating to London society, indicating the easy informality of their relationship: 'I suppose you have heard my Lady Bateman has left my Ld & lodges over against near our house, *e causa di molto discorso*.'[734] It is particularly striking here that Kent explicitly refers to Burlington House as 'our house', leaving no ambiguity as to his status within the Burlington household.

At the time of writing this, in December 1738, Kent had been resident in Burlington House for almost two decades. Although he of course had no legal claim of ownership over the property, he did evidently regard it as his home, an attitude which seems to have been encouraged by both Lord and Lady Burlington. Further evidence is to be found in one of Alexander Pope's letters to Lady Burlington, in which he jokingly refers to Burlington House as 'Mr Kent's House in Piccadilly'.[735] As noted earlier, Kent also maintained a friendship with the dowager Countess and her unmarried daughter, Jane. In 1745, Juliana wrote to her daughter-in-law, Dorothy: 'I have had the favour of Mr Kent's company at dinner once since you went which I took

[733] Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS, CS1/206.5: Kent to Lady Burlington, 14 December 1738.

[734] It has caused much gossip (Kent often inserted Italian phrases into his letters).

[735] G. Sherburn, ed., *Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, 5 vols, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), vol.3, p.389: Pope to Countess of Burlington, 20 October [1733].

for no small obligation.'[736] As noted by Hannah Greig, Kent's important status within the Burlington household aroused some comment in London's wider society. [737] For example, in 1741, Horace Walpole drew attention, with characteristically caustic wit, to Kent's presence at a private London ball: 'There were none but people of the first fashion […] except Mr Kent and Mr Cibber, Mr Swiny and the Parsons family. Kent came as governess to Lady Charlotte Boyle.'[738] By both emasculating Kent and likening him to a servant, Walpole implied that he did not qualify as a member of the fashionable elite.

The elite men and women who lived on the Burlington estate do not appear to have shared Walpole's snobbish view of William Kent's position. Whilst resident at Burlington House, Kent formed many friendships within the immediate neighbourhood. He frequently socialised with both the Arundells and the Pelhams, evidently developing a lasting affection for the two sisters, Frances and Katharine.[739] Both women were later honoured with personal bequests in Kent's will: Lady Pelham received 'a head of Edward VI', and Lady Frances 'the Aurora after Guido Reni'.[740] Moreover, Kent's popularity in the circle of friends and neighbours surrounding the Earl and Countess of Burlington brought him several prestigious commissions. During

[736] Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS, CS1.232.4: Juliana to Dorothy, Lady Burlington, 27 August 1745. Based on contemporary newspaper reports, it seems that Juliana was at this time living in a house on Pall Mall.

[737] Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.256.

[738] Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol.37, p.114: Letter from Horace Walpole to Henry Seymour Conway, 31 October 1741.

[739] For example, in October 1745, Kent wrote to Lady Burlington 'Mr Arundel and Lady Frances came to town last Monday. I went last night to Mr Pelham where I found them both well after their journey and the gentlemen in great spirits.' Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS, CS1.206.12, William Kent to Lady Burlington, 17 October 1745.

[740] TNA PROB 11/761/245, 18 June 1748.

the earliest stages of the estate's construction, he was employed to design the interiors of Richard Arundell's house in Old Burlington Street, and he is also known to have designed much of the furniture for Bryan Fairfax's house in Savile Street.[741] Another important commission came in 1734, when he was employed in the construction of the nearby Devonshire House on Piccadilly for the 3rd Duke of Devonshire. Furthermore, from 1742 onwards, he was engaged in designing the magnificent terraced house in Berkeley Square for Lady Isabella Finch referred to in the opening of this thesis. As the half-aunt and close friend of Lady Burlington, Lady Isabella was a prominent member of the Burlington circle and a frequent visitor to Burlington House, often dining with Kent when his hosts were out of London.[742] Finally, in 1740, Henry Pelham commissioned Kent to build him and his wife a new London residence in Arlington Street, overlooking St James's Park.[743]

Although Kent appears to have continued living in Burlington House, he also had, from about 1732 onwards, the lease of a house in Savile Street, a property which he rented out to enhance his income.[744] In August 1734, he leased it to George, 8th Earl of Huntingdon, and his wife, Selina. The Countess appears to have been particularly enthusiastic about the property, describing it to her husband as 'not only the house of all others in tast and beauty, but upon examining it one of the most convenient in the wide world.' She was also highly appreciative of their attentive landlord, writing: 'Mr Kent has spent the evening with me and is going out of hand to prepare the draught of

[741] *SoL*, vols 31-32, plate 90. See also auction notice, *Public Advertiser*, 7 April 1756.

[742] See for example Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS, CS1 206.7: Kent to Lady Burlington, 8 September 1744: 'Lady Bell dinn'd with me yesterday before her going to her whisk'.

[743] See D. Watkin, 'Town Houses', in Weber, *William Kent*, pp.171-73.

[744] *SoL*, vols 31–32, pp.517–45. Kent is believed to have had some hand in the architecture of both 1 and 2 Savile Street.

the whole inside of your librery […] all other parts he and I shall settle Monday or Tuesday'.[745] The Huntingdons continued to rent the property for a further five years, during which time Kent appears to have developed a genuine friendship with the Countess. The tone of their correspondence through this period suggests a level of familiarity and warmth not normally associated with a landlord-tenant relationship. For example, in July 1739, Kent wrote to the Countess whilst she was staying at her estate at Donnington Park: 'I sup'd with your Friend Nando last Sunday night, he's in a malancholy way about the rest of his Teeth, but however whe drank my Lords & your good health whe are quite alone in town & hardly any scandels'.[746] Moreover, any business concerning improvements to the house appears to have been managed between Selina and Kent, without the involvement of her husband. In September 1739, for example, Kent informed her: 'I have made ye Kitchen very Light [and] I have put new windows [in] & have had it clean'd & whiten'd'.[747] When the Huntingdons moved their London residence to Downing Street in January 1740, Kent wrote to express his 'uttmost regrett' at losing 'so good a tennant'.[748] Despite leaving the neighbourhood, however, the Countess continued to hold Kent in high regard. Following her husband's death in October 1746, she commissioned Kent to design an elaborate monument to him, for the Hastings Chapel of St Helen's Church, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

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[745] Lady Huntingdon to Lord Huntingdon, 29 [August] 1734, quoted in E. Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim* (Cardiff, 1995), p.25.

[746] 'Nando' referred to Ferdinando Fairfax who lived with his brother, Bryan, at 1 Savile Street, as mentioned above. See Willis, 'William Kent's Letters', HA 8043, William Kent to Countess of Huntingdon, 17 July 1739.

[747] Willis, 'William Kent's Letters', HA 8045, William Kent to Countess of Huntingdon, 25 September 1739.

[748] *Ibid.*, HA 8047, William Kent to Countess of Huntingdon, 26 January 1739/40.

As noted above, Lord Burlington's patronage was not limited to artists and architects; he was also a munificent patron of writers. The most prominent writer to inhabit Burlington's inner circle was Alexander Pope who, in 1731, published a dedication to his friend and patron, extolling the Earl's taste: *An Epistle to Lord Burlington*.[749] During the early stages of the estate's development, Pope had seriously considered purchasing a plot in Old Burlington Street. In 1718, he wrote to Burlington: 'I have piqued myself upon being your Tenant in that piece of ground behind Burlington House (which situation I am fond of to ye last degree)', but he was eventually dissuaded from doing so on account of 'ye expense'.[750] He did, however, cohabit with his friend Erasmus Lewis in Cork Street from 1739 to 1740, and he was a regular visitor at Burlington House from 1718 until his death in 1744.[751] Pope's association with Burlington House and its artistic coterie in the public consciousness is evident in the satirical print, *Taste or Burlington Gate* (1732). Here, Pope is depicted as a plasterer, spattering passers-by with whitewash as he balances precariously on the scaffolding attached to the house's main gateway in Piccadilly (fig.4.32).

However, whilst Pope's enduring friendship with the Earl is well documented, his friendship with Dorothy, Lady Burlington, has received less attention. Surviving letters between the Countess and poet reveal a friendly intimacy, their exchanges punctuated with lively wit and in-jokes. Lady Burlington's sketch of Pope playing cards, a seemingly affectionate caricature, suggests this easy relationship, especially since the poet was notoriously self-conscious about his physical deformity (fig.4.33).

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[749] For a discussion on the poem see P. Ayres, 'Pope's Epistle to Burlington: The Vitruvian Analogies', *Studies in English Literature*, 1500-1900, 30: 3, (1990), pp.429-44.

[750] See Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS CS1.143.3: Alexander Pope to Lord Burlington, 11 October [1718].

[751] *SoL*, vols 31-32, pp.566-72.

As noted above, the two collaborated on preparing the papers of the Countess's grandfather, George Savile, for publication – a task which Pope set about with palpable enthusiasm: 'Yr Ladyships commands will be a better thing than an Honour, they are really a Pleasure & Improvement to me.' Henrietta, Countess of Suffolk, and Anne, Lady Irwin, were also connected to Pope. As noted earlier, Lady Suffolk had drawn Pope into her intellectual circle during her time at court and they had enjoyed a close friendship thereafter.[752] Meanwhile, Lady Irwin was a poet of some ability herself and an active participant in London's literary circles, as revealed by her numerous letters to her father, the Earl of Carlisle.[753] In December 1736, just before moving into her new house in New Burlington Street, she had published a poem entitled, *Epistle to Mr Pope by a Lady*, presenting a counter argument to Pope's provocative moral essay, *Epistle to a Lady: On the Characters of Women* (1735).[754] It thus seems likely that the Burlington neighbourhood provided ample opportunity for the two poets to engage in lively literary discussions.

To some extent, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry's relationship with John Gay, referred to above, can be seen to emulate the type of patronage practised at Burlington House, involving both hospitality and familiarity. When Gay fell ill in March 1729, he was immediately brought to Queensberry House to recuperate. Writing to Jonathan Swift, he spoke of the exceptional kindness he had received from the Duke and Duchess, claiming: 'if I had been their nearest relation and nearest friend [they]

[752] Marschner, *Queen Caroline*, p.130. Pope was also Lady Suffolk's neighbour in Twickenham.

[753] H. de Groff, 'Textural Networks and the Country House: The 3rd Earl of Carlisle at Castle Howard' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2012), p.133. De Groff has noted how Lady Irwin's letters played an important role in linking her father to London's cultural networks, p.137.

[754] Anne Ingram, Lady Irwin, 'An Epistle to Mr. Pope, Occasioned by his Characters of Women', *Gentleman's Magazine* 6 (December 1736), p.745.

could not have treated me with more constant attendance then, and they continue the same to me now'.[755] In the same letter, he describes how he had taken over a room 'next to our dining-room' at Queensberry House, to bind the copies of his new controversial opera, *Polly*.[756] It is noteworthy that Gay, like Kent, here uses a possessive pronoun when referring to the domestic space he shared with the Duke and Duchess, suggesting that, even at this early date, he felt fully at home in Queensberry House. He appears to have been particularly attached to the Duchess, writing to Swift in November 1729: 'To the Lady I live with I owe my life and fortune.'[757] Over the next few years, Gay became so fully integrated in the Duchess's domestic life that they took to writing joint letters to many of their friends. Having received one of these combined missives, Swift complained: 'You and the Dss use me very ill, for I profess I cannot distinguish the Style or the handwriting of either. I think Her Grace writes more like you than yourself.'[758] This fusion of epistolary style makes an interesting parallel with the comparable drawing style of their neighbours, Lady Burlington and William Kent.

The above evidence indicates that some degree of social fluidity, based on artistic prowess and achievement, was at play within the elite community associated with the Burlington estate. Both William Kent and John Gay were from humble backgrounds but, during their residences at Burlington House and Queensberry House respectively, they mixed with some of the highest-ranking members of London society. This was also the case for female protegées of the Burlington circle. The

[755] BL Add MS 4805, f.184: Gay to Swift, 18 March 1728/9.

[756] *Ibid.*

[757] *Letters written by the late Jonathan Swift*, ed. J. Hawkesworth, 2 vols (London, 1765), vol. 2, p.103: Gay to Swift, 9 November 1729.

[758] Sherburn, *Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, vol 3, p.218: Swift to Gay, 28 August 1731.

actress, Lavinia Fenton (1710-1760), a close associate of Gay, had achieved almost overnight celebrity performing the role of Polly Peachum in the *Beggar's Opera*, which premiered on 29 January 1728. Later the same year, thanks to the financial support of her lover, the Duke of Bolton, Lavinia was able to set up residence in Cork Street. Here, she bore the Duke at least one child.[759] As an unmarried mother and actress, her reputation in society could well have been considered precarious, but it seems that she was accepted by the community on account of her talent and her association with Gay, not to mention the protection of the Duke of Bolton. Her move to 18 New Bond Street, the house in the north-west corner of the estate, in 1730, may have been driven by the need to accommodate her growing family, but it also bears testament to her rise in status, since here she became a property owner in her own right.[760] According to a report in the *Evening Post* dating from September that year, she was to 'set up a very handsome equipage' at her new address.[761]

Another actress to have prospered in the Burlington circle was the young Eva Maria Veigel (1724-1822), who had left her home in Vienna to work in London in 1746. Her talent soon brought her to the attention of Lady Burlington who invited her to take up residence at Burlington House, thereby rescuing her from the morally fraught world of the theatre. Whilst living with the Burlingtons, Eva Maria came to the

[759] *Evening Post*, 6-8 August 1730: 'Miss Fenton, commonly called Polly Peachum was brought to Bed of a boy, at her lodgings in Cork Street.'

[760] As seen in fig.4.4, a few of the houses on east side of New Bond Street fell within the boundary of the estate. For a discussion on how actresses such as Fenton ameliorated their position in society by 'cultivating wealthy, well-placed friends', see F. Nussblaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p.95.

[761] *Evening Post*, 10-12 September 1730; Lavinia remained in New Bond Street until 1734. After the death of his wife in 1751, the Duke married Lavinia, thus elevating her to the rank of duchess. She then moved to 1 Grosvenor Square where she remained after her husband's death in 1754.

romantic attention of the celebrated actor and theatre manager, David Garrick. The Countess, who harboured greater ambitions for her protégée, was initially opposed to the match, but she later overcame her reservations, endowing Eva Maria with a generous annuity on her own estates in Lincolnshire as a wedding present.[762]

The final phase in Lady Burlington's life has been somewhat neglected by scholars, who have tended to assume that she retreated into her villa in Chiswick, lamenting a number of bereavements.[763] The death of her husband in December 1753 was followed by that of her only surviving daughter, Charlotte, in 1754. However, surviving correspondence in the Chatsworth archive indicates that, in this period, she found new roles in assisting Charlotte's widower, William Cavendish, the Marquess of Hartington, with the management of the Burlington estates, and as an attentive grandmother towards his four now motherless grandchildren.[764] These letters reveal that much of her time was spent in London whilst the Marquess was occupied in Dublin in his capacity as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. For example, a letter dated 31 May 1755 indicates that she was charged with overseeing the refurbishment then taking place at Burlington House: 'I shou'd have been settled at Chiswick before now but it has been very necessary for me to stay on account of the workmen who (to do

[762] P. Thompson, 'Garrick [*née* Veigel], Eva Maria [*performing name* Violette]' *ODNB* (2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28330.

[763] For example, Judy Egerton has described Lady Burlington as 'overtaken by illness and solitude' following the death of her husband. Egerton 'Boyle [née Savile], Dorothy, Countess of Burlington'.

[764] Charlotte was the only surviving heir of Lord Burlington when he died in 1753 but, in accordance with the terms of her marriage settlement of 1748, the Burlington estates passed directly to the Cavendish family. For evidence that Lady Burlington assisted her son-in-law with management of the Burlington estates in Ireland, see Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS, CS1/164.28, Lady Burlington to Lord Hartington, 28 October 1755: 'I […] went yesterday morning to London on purpose to enquire of Sr Anty concerning what you mention'd about the fishery...'

'em justice) have dispatch.'[765] In the same letter, she writes affectionately of her grandchildren, staying with her in the house: 'the children are all well; & Cann (who is now by me) desires I will tell you that Mr Steed says he is good.'[766]

Furthermore, in emphasising her attachment to Chiswick, scholars have overlooked the fact that she also purchased a house on Savile Street only two years before her death. This was the southernmost house on the street which had formerly belonged to her friends, Bryan and Fernando Fairfax (fig.4.34). According to a report in the *Public Advertiser*, she paid £3,900 for the property which commanded a view over both Queensberry House and the gardens of her previous London residence.[767] Here, she could continue to maintain close contact with her remaining family and friends, especially Richard and Frances Arundell, then living at 29 Old Burlington Street. The house remained in Dorothy's ownership until she herself died in September 1758. In her will, she named Richard Arundell as one of her chief beneficiaries, honouring the close friend and neighbour whom she had known since her marriage to Burlington in 1721.[768]

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how the land owned by the 3rd Earl of Burlington in London came to be developed into a fashionable residential neighbourhood during the first half

[765] Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS, CS1/164.20: Lady Burlington to Lord Hartington, London, 31 May 1755.

[766] 'Cann' appears to have been a sobriquet for her eldest grandchild, William Cavendish (1748-1811) who later became 5th Duke of Devonshire.

[767] *Public Avertiser*, 7 April 1756.

[768] TNA PROB 11/840/371: Will of the Right Honourable Dorothy, Countess of Burlington.

of the eighteenth century. I have argued that the vibrant model of artistic patronage practised at Burlington House set the tone for establishing the character of the new development, first under the dowager Countess, Juliana, and later under her son and daughter-in-law, Richard and Dorothy. Like many of London's elite neighbourhoods, the Burlington estate was a hub for kinship and friendship. However, what gave this locality its particular character was the way in which these social networks were intimately interwoven with the artistic community. Although previous studies exploring the overlapping bonds of patronage and friendship have tended to focus on relationships between men, such as that between Lord Burlington and William Kent, this chapter has drawn attention to the crucial role of women in supporting artists, musicians, writers and actresses through hospitality and friendship.

In contrast to the Whitehall area, the layout and character of the new streets on the Burlington estate expressed harmony and order which most likely contributed to a sense of belonging in the neighbourhood. Although located close to the royal court of St James's, the estate was not bound by the constraints of the crown lease system. Indeed, its residents appear to have enjoyed a sense of independence from royal authority, its grandest houses providing an alternative venue for elite socialising. United by an enthusiasm for art, architecture and literature, the elite men and women of the Burlington circle thus helped to build the estate's reputation as one of the most fashionable residential areas of the West End.

Part Three: LINEAGE

Chapter 5

The Women of the Wentworth Family at 5 St James's Square

So far, this thesis has examined women's involvement with the town house from two different perspectives. The first two chapters each focused on a single case study, contextualising the design, construction and function of a town house within the biography of the patron and owner. Chapters three and four broadened the scope to examine specific areas or neighbourhoods in the capital from the perspective of their female residents. This final chapter shifts focus again, this time temporally, to examine the relationship of one family – the Wentworth family – with their town house in St James's Square over a span of almost eight decades. Such an approach allows me to reprise some of the major themes raised in earlier chapters, including kinship, cohabitation, politics and the ceremonial use of the town house, but from a new perspective.

Of key importance to this chapter is the concept of the lineage family, characterised by features such as continuity, family honour and inheritance. It has been noted that the lineage family tended to find its greatest expression in the country house, whilst the town house was generally a more mutable affair, often more closely connected with the life of the individual.[769] Moreover, the vast majority of available town houses were offered for purchase as a leasehold, so were embedded in the market economy, unencumbered with the obligations of land ownership.[770] For those unwilling to invest substantial capital in the purchase of a house on this basis, there

[769] See Retford, 'Introduction', *Georgian London Town House*, p.5; Stewart, *Town House*, p.61.

[770] Stewart, *Town House*, p.57.

was also the option to rent, especially if the house was only required for the parliamentary season. Nonetheless, as has become clear in some of the case studies explored in this thesis, many aristocrats did in fact consider their town house to be a durable asset which could be passed on to their descendants, thereby strengthening the public image of their dynasty. This was particularly true of detached, palatial town houses such as Burlington House on Piccadilly, Marlborough House on Pall Mall or Richmond House in Whitehall's Privy Garden. However, even these grand family mansions could have a limited life span. In the latter two cases, the properties were constructed on crown land, meaning that they ultimately reverted to the crown. Consequently, freehold residences or those held on long-term leases were more likely to remain in the same family's ownership over several generations.[771]

The terraced house was less likely to be considered as an enduring family asset. There were, however, notable exceptions, some of the most obvious being those in St James's Square. Described by Nikolaus Pevsner as 'the first of the true West End Squares', it had been created from around 1665 onwards by the Earl of St Albans, with the intention of providing 'great and good houses' for courtiers in close proximity to St James's Palace.[772] The square was apparently based on the principles of classical architecture advocated by Inigo Jones, a personal friend of St Albans.[773] The Earl had initially envisaged a layout consisting of three or four palatial mansions on each of the four sides of the square, designed to attract the very 'best' families.[774] Conscious that such prospective purchasers might be reluctant to invest large sums in building on a

[771] Port, 'West End Palaces', pp.17-46.

[772] Bradley and Pevsner, *Buildings of England, London 6: Westminster*, p.624.

[773] Anthony R.J.S. Adolph, 'Jermyn [Germain], Henry, earl of St Albans' (1605-1684), *ODNB* (2004) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14780

[774] Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.25.

leasehold site, he had successfully petitioned for the freehold in 1665.[775] However that original design underwent significant change after the great fire of London in 1666. In response to the subsequent increased demand for property in the West End, he decided to increase the number of dwellings in the square to twenty-two, almost doubling the figure previously envisaged.

As seen in the plan of the square as it was laid out in 1676, most of the houses had frontages extending about fifty feet. However, there were some grander residences, including the plots of the Earl of Arlington and Lord Bellayse, both on the east side, spanning 100 feet and 133 feet respectively (fig.5.1). As noted in the *Survey of London*, the method of selling the plots varied, with some being sold directly to the intending occupant, whilst others were sold to a builder who then constructed a house on the site and sought their own purchaser. This resulted in a situation in which all the houses were in separate ownership after the first few years. Moreover, for most of the square's history, the houses were typically occupied by the owners of freeholds, who could potentially pass the property on to their descendants indefinitely, in the manner of a country house.[776] This was the case, for example, with number 31, the London residence of the Dukes of Norfolk from 1722 until its demolition in 1938; number 6, occupied by the Hervey family from 1700 until 1955; and number 5, which remained in the family of the Earls of Strafford from 1711 until 1968.[777]

The site of 5 St James's Square had been sold by the Earl of St Albans to trustees for George Clisby on 1-2 April 1675, at a ground rent of £15: 8*s*. 4*d*.[778] It is

[775] *Ibid.* St Albans had originally been granted a sixty-year lease on the site by the crown in 1662.

[776] *SoL*, vols 29-30, pp.56-76; Stewart, *Town House*, p.65.

[777] *SoL*, vols 29-30, pp.99-103.

[778] The 1st Earl of Strafford most likely acquired the freehold of the site in May 1730 when most of the ground rents payable to the St Alban's estate were extinguished. *SoL*, vols 29-30, pp.56-76.

not known who built the house, but it was completed by the following year and its first occupant was Henry Hyde, 2nd Earl of Clarendon (1638-1709). At first glance, the succession of male owners who occupied 5 St James's Square over the course of the eighteenth century might suggest that the property is of little value to the present study.[779] However, women were in fact crucial to its history. Over the eight decades explored here, 5 St James's Square provided a home – either long-term or temporary – to three generations of wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of the Wentworth family. These women played essential roles in the shaping and functioning of the house, often with a view to promoting the interests of their male relatives, thereby demonstrating a deep respect for lineage and its patriarchal values.[780]

This chapter concentrates on the mother, wife and daughter-in-law of Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford (1672-1739), in the context of their residence in London, from approximately 1705 to 1785 (fig.5.2). At the start of this period, the first of these women, Lady Isabella Wentworth (née Apsley) (*c.*1649-1733), was already a widow with six adult children. As was the case with the Countess of Portland, discussed in chapter 3, Isabella spent a considerable period of the year living in London, enabling her to maintain kinship ties with her children and grandchildren and, most importantly, to support the interests of Thomas, her eldest surviving son. In 1711, at the age of thirty-nine, Thomas married Anne Johnson (*c.*1684-1754), a wealthy heiress, whose fortune helped him to pay off several debts and to purchase 5 St James's Square, a house in the north-east corner. As will be seen, Anne was largely responsible for the decoration and furnishing of the house during the early years of her

[779] One earlier exception to this was the Countess of Thanet who owned the house between 1684 and 1704.

[780] See also Tague, 'Aristocratic women', p.186.

marriage. The union produced three daughters and a son, William, who became the 2nd Earl of Strafford on his father's death in 1739. Two years later, William married Anne (née Campbell) (*c*.1720-85), daughter of the Duke of Argyll. The marriage lasted forty-four years until her death in 1785. In 1748-49, William employed the architect, Matthew Brettingham, to rebuild 5 St James's Square, and this building has survived relatively intact to the present (although an additional floor was added in the nineteenth century) (fig.5.13). A childless woman, whose husband maintained a certain aloofness from political life, the second Lady Strafford's role differed considerably from that of her mother-in-law, as I will explore. However, the couple still maintained a presence in the capital, attending the theatre and opera, and socialising in the circle of Horace Walpole.

The research presented in this chapter draws extensively on the Wentworth papers housed in the British Library; an exceptionally rich archive covering the affairs of the Wentworth family over the course of the eighteenth century. Of particular value here are the letters written by Lady Isabella Wentworth and her daughter-in-law, Anne, the first Lady Strafford, who both maintained a regular correspondence with Thomas, Lord Strafford, during his absences abroad, or attending to his country estates.[781] They provided him with detailed updates on matters of familial, social and political import. This is not the first study to make use of this especially valuable archive. In her illuminating study, *The Beau Monde*, Hannah Greig drew extensively on Lady Strafford's correspondence to shed light on the workings of fashionable society in eighteenth-century London. She showed how the Countess attached considerable

[781] The collection includes approximately 700 folios of letters written by Lady Strafford to her husband, relating to two periods: 1711-14 and 1729-39. There are also several hundred letters written by Lady Wentworth to her son between 1705 and 1714. A selection of these letters has been published in Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*.

importance to the display of carefully selected material goods when establishing her position in elite society. Greig also effectively demonstrated how Lady Strafford participated in political culture through her strategic social networking in the capital.[782] Meanwhile, Ingrid Tague has drawn on both Lady Wentworth's and Lady Strafford's letters in two related areas of research. The first examines how women fashioned identities within the boundaries set by the model of patriarchy. The second explores the role of aristocratic women in relation to the family.[783] I aim to offer another perspective on the women of the Wentworth family, building on both Greig and Tague's research, but focusing here specifically on the relationship between these women and the spaces of 5 St James's Square, covering themes such as household management, cohabitation and the ceremonial use of the house especially in relation to childbirth.

This case study also engages with the various different concepts of family which coexisted in the eighteenth century, as identified by Naomi Tadmor. In addition to the lineage family, noted above, there is the household family, denoting everyone living under a single roof; the bilateral family, in which relatives from both the husband and wife's side of the family could be equally important for the transfer of wealth and emotional ties. Finally, there is the extended family, referring to kin beyond the nuclear core, but connected to them through either blood or marriage. As noted in previous chapters, although members of the extended family were typically non co-resident, they would often take up temporary residence in the household according to circumstance and necessity.[784]

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[782] Greig, *Beau Monde.*

[783] Tague, *Women of Quality*; Tague, 'Aristocratic Women', pp.184-208.

[784] See Tadmor, *Family and Friends,* p.37.

The chapter is divided into three parts, examining the experiences of each generation in turn in relation to their domicile in London. Part 2, focusing on Anne, the first Lady Strafford, is significantly longer than the others since it offers an exceptionally rich case study of a wife's relationship with her London residence. However, there is considerable intersection between the three. For example, Lady Isabella Wentworth continues as a strong presence in the history of the house after her son's marriage in 1711. Another significant female member of the family, featured in both parts 1 and 2, is Anne Wentworth, later Conolly (1713-97), the eldest daughter of Thomas, 1st Earl of Strafford, and the eldest sister of William, 2nd Earl. She was born in the house in 1713, and eventually inherited the property after her brother died without an heir in 1791. To avoid any confusion between these women, Isabella Wentworth (née Apsley) will be referred to as Lady Wentworth. Anne (née Johnson), the first Countess of Strafford, will be referred to as Lady Strafford; Anne (née Campbell), the second countess, will be referred to as Lady Anne Campbell and, finally, Anne Conolly (née Wentworth) will be referred to as Lady Anne Conolly.

Part 1: Lady Isabella (née Apsley) Wentworth (*c.*1649-1733)

In common with many of the women discussed in this thesis, Isabella, Lady Wentworth, had been born into a family closely connected to the royal court. Her father, Sir Allen Apsley, had been treasurer of the household of James II, and her elder sister, Frances, had been a close confidante of Princess Mary. In 1667, Isabella had married Sir William Wentworth, a nephew of the royalist martyr, Thomas Wentworth,

1st Earl of Strafford of the first creation (1593-1641).[785] However, it was through her father's influence that she secured a position as a Lady of the Bedchamber to Mary of Modena, second wife of James, Duke of York, around 1673. Isabella's son, Thomas, later joined her in the royal household in 1687, when he was appointed page of honour to Mary, by then Queen Consort. The following year, Isabella witnessed the birth of James, Prince of Wales, placing her at the centre of the controversy relating to the authenticity of the royal birth.[786] It is not clear what happened to Lady Wentworth in the immediate aftermath of the King's flight into exile in 1688. However, her son, Thomas, rapidly transferred his allegiance to William III, thereafter embarking on a successful career as a soldier, and later a diplomat. Thomas's actions may well have helped his mother to maintain a position at court after the departure of her royal mistress.

The final decade of the seventeenth century proved to be one of great loss for Lady Wentworth. The death of her husband in 1692 was followed by the deaths of three of her five sons. The eldest, William, died of a fever in 1693, whilst his brothers, Paul and Allen, both died in action (in 1695 and 1702 respectively). At the beginning of Queen Anne's reign, Lady Wentworth was therefore a widow with six adult children: two sons and four daughters. Her correspondence reveals that she was particularly devoted to her eldest surviving son, Thomas, who had assumed the role of

[785] Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford, an advisor to Charles I, was executed in 1641. However, his son, William, regained the title in 1661, becoming 2nd Earl of Strafford. When he died without issue in 1695, the earldom became extinct but the claim to the Raby baronetage was inherited by the 1st Earl's great-nephew, Thomas Wentworth (son of Sir William and Lady Isabella Wentworth). Thomas, Baron Raby, became 1st Earl of Strafford of the second creation in 1711.

[786] The birth of a Catholic heir was perceived as a threat by many Protestants. This led to the creation of a conspiracy theory claiming that the baby was not legitimate but had been smuggled into the Queen's birthing chamber in a warming pan. See Weil, *Political Passions*, pp.86-104.

head of the family in 1693, and subsequently been elevated to the peerage as Lord Raby in 1695.[785] However, unfortunately for him, the Wentworth estates had been inherited by his cousin, Thomas Watson, son of Lord Rockingham. Thomas, Lord Raby, therefore had a title, but no landed estate. His mother appears, as a consequence, to have devoted much of her attention to promoting his personal and financial interests. She even went so far as to settle her entire fortune on him, sacrificing her jointure, and accepting instead an annual income of £200.[787] This extraordinary gesture placed Lady Wentworth in a position of dependence on her son, but at no point do her letters indicate any regret over the decision.

So how did Lady Wentworth's changing personal and professional circumstances affect her living arrangements? In common with many of the female courtiers discussed in this thesis, Isabella had benefited from her own set of lodgings in St James's Palace as a Lady of the Bedchamber to Mary of Modena. However, as noted in chapter 3, she had been obliged to forfeit these rooms in 1698 when they were required for William, Duke of Gloucester, Princess Anne's son. She had then been provided with alternative lodgings in the Cockpit at Whitehall Palace. It seems that she later limited herself to the upper floor of this royal apartment, reserving the ground floor for the use of her son, Thomas. Indeed, she claimed that her desire to retain the Cockpit lodgings was chiefly for his sake, since they were 'soe convenyent' for him on his visits to London, given their proximity to both the court and parliament.[788] However, there appear to have been certain drawbacks associated with the

[787] See Tague, 'Aristocratic Women', p.190: Lady Wentworth claimed that her jointure had been worth '£540 per year'. See also Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p.480.

[788] BL Add MS 31143, f.4: Lady Wentworth (hereafter Lady W) to Thomas Wentworth (hereafter TW), 14 July 1704. Thomas also owned a riverside property in Twickenham (purchased around 1701).

accommodation. Not only was the lodging in a poor state of repair, but its service quarters could be reallocated at royal will. On one occasion, Isabella was obliged to forfeit the use of her kitchen and laundry for the benefit of a foreign diplomat even though, as she pointed out, the kitchen was 'falling to peecis.'[789] The expense and lack of privacy also gave her cause for complaint: 'these lodgings ar very chargable & all things in publick, nothing spoke are dun but known to all the town'.[790]

When, some time later, Thomas informed her of his intention to purchase his own property in London, Isabella wrote, 'it rejoysis me very much to hear you are to have a hous, whether I am to have a room in it or not, pray be ingenious & tell me the sincear truith, or whether I am designed to stay hear which ever pleesis you best shall me'.[791] Although Thomas's response has not survived, it seems that he eventually decided against inviting his mother to live with him in London.[792] It may be significant that Lady Wentworth later expressed reservations about cohabiting with a future daughter-in-law for fear that 'sum tattling sarvents or aquantenc will put jealosees in thear head to breed discontents.'[793] This may have been heartfelt, or perhaps rather a matter of saving face in the absence of an invitation to join Thomas in his new house.

This brings us to another recurring subject in Lady Wentworth's letters: her desire for Thomas to marry. As both her favourite son and head of the family, Thomas

[789] BL Add MS 31143, ff.102-103: Lady W to TW, 20 November [1705].

[790] BL Add MS 31143, f.47: Lady W to TW, 12 June [1705].

[791] BL Add MS 31144, f.218: Lady W to TW, n.d.

[792] Lady Wentworth remained in possession of her apartment in the Cockpit until 1722. *Daily Journal*, 14 August 1722.

[793] BL Add MS 31143, f.74: Lady W to TW, 4 September 1705.

was under considerable pressure to perpetuate the family line.[794] Moreover, if able to marry an heiress, he could remedy his precarious financial position. As noted by Helen Jacobsen, during the first decade of the eighteenth century, Thomas (at that time Lord Raby) had adopted a highly extravagant lifestyle in keeping with his role as a foreign diplomat, especially after his promotion to Ambassador Extraordinary in Berlin in 1705.[795] Three years later, he had purchased an estate at Stainborough in Yorkshire, costing him £14,150. Moreover, in 1709, he had taken a trip to Italy with the specific aim of purchasing a great art collection.[796] Not surprisingly, these activities left him heavily in debt.[797] Wealth, therefore, proved a desirable attribute in the candidates singled out by Lady Wentworth for her son's consideration as when she wrote: 'My sister Batthurst givs a great carrector of Johnson's Daughter the great fortune, I wish you had her'.[798] In her frank assessment of the elite marriage market she made no attempt to disguise her pragmatism: 'Lady Tufton has buiryed this last Sunday one of

[794] For example, after visiting a friend who had just given birth, Lady Wentworth wrote: 'I howerly wish I had a wife of yrs to visitt upon the same acount.' BL Add MS 31145, f.429: Lady W to TW, 29 December 1709.

[795] By December 1705, Thomas had set up residence in considerable style in one of the most fashionable quarters of Berlin with an equipage of 66 staff, including a French *sommelier*, a confectioner, three cooks. See H. Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power: the Material World of the Stuart Diplomat, 1660-1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.213

[796] Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, p.216. In a letter to his aunt, Lady Bathurst, Thomas referred to 'the great good Quantety of pictures I bought there [in Italy] which tho it cost me a great deal yet it is a furniture for me and my posterity'. BL Add MS 31145, f.441: 21 January 1710.

[797] Between 1710 and 1720, Thomas set about rebuilding Stainborough Hall to the designs of the architect Johann Van Bodt. See C. Saumarez Smith, *The Rise of Design: Design and the Domestic Interior in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London, 2000), pp.34-35. Thomas's debts are frequently referred to by his steward. See, for example, BL Add MS 22232, f.333: 6 October 1711: Captain Ellison to TW: 'your debts are much more considerable then you think'.

[798] Cartwright, *Wentworth papers*, p.50: 2 October 1705. This was probably a reference to Anne Johnson, Thomas's future bride.

her Daughters but has five very handsom ons left; for five thoussand pd you may b[u]y her hous & one or twoe may be bated if you will take a daughter.'[799]

However, in seeking a bride for her son, Lady Wentworth also attached importance to the candidate's ability to manage a household efficiently. In December 1706, she wrote to Thomas: 'I fancy you might with out any great difficulty gett a very prety good youmored young Lady that has been brought up modistly & good huswifry ingrafted in her'. [800] On another occasion she praised the virtues of Lady Humble as a prospective wife on the grounds that she was 'soe good a huswife she will duble her fortune by good manadgment'.[801] In giving such advice, she was echoing that to be found in contemporary conduct manuals directed towards women.[802] For example, at around this date, Richard Steele argued in *The Ladies Library* that women of quality should be well instructed in 'all the Arts which have respect to House-keeping'.[803]

Alongside this endeavour to identify a suitable wife for Thomas, Lady Wentworth was also preoccupied with finding him a town house. A number of her letters dating from this period include descriptions of various properties which had come onto the market. These were all located within a short radius of the royal court at St James's, and within walking distance of her own lodgings in Whitehall. Two of the

[799] BL Add MS 31143, f.512: Lady W to TW, 13 July 1710. The house referred to is Yorke House in Twickenham.

[800] BL Add MS 31143, f.184: Lady W to TW, 3 December 1706.

[801] BL Add MS 31143, f.512: Lady W to TW, 13 July 1710. Lady Humble was a daughter of Sir William Humble (d.1705).

[802] Scholars, including Tague and Vickery, have noted that the preoccupation with good government in the household was a persistent trope of contemporary conduct literature. Tague, *Women of Quality*, p.98; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.127.

[803] [G. Berkeley], *The Ladies Library. Written by a Lady. Published by Mr Steele* (London, 1772; 1st edn., 1714), vol.2, p.242.

houses proposed by Lady Wentworth for her son were located in St James's Square, suggesting that she deemed this site particularly suitable for the establishment of his London residence. The first, which she visited on his behalf in 1708, was Old St Albans House, a property with a sixty-eight-foot frontage in the south-east corner of the square. She expressed a strong wish that Thomas should take this property, describing it as 'a noble hous and fitt for you' (fig.5.1).[804] It is interesting to note her employment of the word 'noble', indicating that the house would appropriately reflect her son's rank, something she was particularly conscious of given his recent elevation to the peerage.[805] According to her description, the house had 'thre large rooms forward and two little ons backward, closetts and marble chimney peices and harths to all the best rooms'.[806] Thus, in common with most town houses of the period, the main reception rooms were located at the front of the building, overlooking the square, whilst the smaller, more private rooms for day-to-day use were situated towards the rear. Lady Wentworth also pointed out the potential to build a gallery over the offices, a factor likely to have appealed to Thomas, given his passion for collecting art. Finally, Lady Wentworth drew attention to the house's freehold status as a noteworthy asset: 'It is free ground rent and all is [in]heretanc[e]'. She thus clearly considered investment in property to be of long-term benefit to her son and his future descendants. It is not known whether or not the Earl came close to purchasing this house but it appears to have remained empty until it was acquired by 2nd Earl of Portland in 1710. As one of the larger houses in the square, it is possible that it proved too expensive for

[804] Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p.65: 26 November 1708.

[805] *OED*: adjective: Of, relating to, or befitting a person or people of high rank.

[806]Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p.64: 23 November 1708.

Thomas.[807] However, his mother's enthusiasm for the property may have persuaded him to target St James's Square as his favoured location.

Two years later, Lady Wentworth wrote enthusiastically about another house in the square which had come onto the market. This was number 21, located on the west side, then owned by Catherine Colyear (née Sedley), Countess of Dorchester. In describing this property to Thomas in a letter of 29 December 1710, Isabella noted that it was 'the strongist built' and 'the best in the squar', benefiting from 'a pretty little garden' with high walls 'so none should overlook them'. It also had a coach house and stables for more than eight horses.[808] Lady Wentworth claimed that it had been built by her own father, Sir Allen Apsley, by the order of King James (then Duke of York). James had commissioned the house in 1673 for his mistress, Arabella Churchill, and had most likely engaged Apsley, his treasurer of the household, to oversee its construction.[809] From Lady Wentworth's viewpoint, her father's involvement greatly contributed towards the house's appeal. Not only did it apparently give her greater confidence in the quality of the workmanship, but it meant that the property reflected her family's historical links with royalty. Moreover, Sir Allen himself had originally occupied the neighbouring property, number 20. This had remained in the Apsley family after his death and, in the period in question, it was owned by Isabella's

[807] In 1722, the Earl of Portland sold the house to Thomas, 8th Duke of Norfolk, as discussed in chapter 2.

[808] BL Add MS 31144, f.220: Lady W to TW, 29 December [1710].

[809] In her letter Lady Wentworth claimed that the house was built for 'Lady Dorchester' but, as noted in the *Survey of London*, it was actually built for Arabella Churchill, James II's previous mistress, who occupied the house from 1675 to 1678. Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester purchased the house from Arabella's husband, Charles Godfrey, in 1686. BL Add MS 31144, f.221: Lady W to TW, 29 December [1710]; *SoL* 29-30, pp.174-80.

nephew, Lord Bathurst.[810] She likely considered the presence of such high-ranking family members in the immediate neighbourhood to be of potential benefit to her son's position and reputation. The closing section of this letter reveals the extent to which her ambition to find her son a town house was linked to her desire to secure him a spouse: 'My paper is al fild with thees housis. I wish the best of them were fild with you and all your goods with the adetion of a good, buiteful, vertious wife'.[811] However, despite Lady Wentworth's best efforts to facilitate her son's purchase of 21 St James's Square, it appears that the property was taken off the market, since it remained in the possession of Lady Dorchester until her death in 1717.[812] As will be explored in the next section, it was not until 1711, the year of his marriage to Anne Johnson, that Thomas finally found an affordable house in the square which met his desired criteria.

Part 2: Anne (née Johnson), 1st Countess of Strafford (*c.*1684-1754)

The year 1711 proved to be one of momentous change for Thomas Wentworth. In March, he was appointed British ambassador at the Hague, and in June, he was elevated to the Earldom. Then, on 6 September, he realised one of Lady Wentworth's oft- expressed ambitions for him by marrying Anne Johnson, only daughter and heir of the wealthy shipowner, Sir Henry Johnson of Bradenham (*c.*1659-1719). Her dowry was estimated by the writer, Jonathan Swift, to amount to £60,000; 'ready money;

[810] Allen Bathurst, 1st Earl Bathurst (1684-1775) was the son of Frances Apsley, Lady Wentworth's sister. This house (20 St James's Square) had originally been occupied by Sir Allen Apsley from around 1675. It remained in the Apsley family until 1771. *SoL*, vols 29-30, pp.164-74.

[811] BL Add MS 31144, f.221, Lady W to TW, 29 December 1710.

[812] *SoL*, vols 29-30, pp.174-80.

besides the rest at the father's death.'[813] However, Thomas continued to fret about his financial affairs, suggesting that Swift perhaps over-estimated the sum of 'ready money'.[814] It is not clear whether Lady Wentworth was responsible for bringing the couple together, but she certainly appears to have been happy with her son's choice: 'I hartely thanck God for giving me the great blessing & true sattisfaction of seing you soe well setled with soe good a wife that has all the charmse to make you throughout happy'.[815]

5 St James's Square

Only a few weeks after his marriage, most likely with financial assistance from his father-in-law, Sir Henry Johnson, Lord Strafford purchased a four-bay terraced house in the north-east corner of St James's Square from the politician, Sir Richard Child (1680-1750).[816] Although the exact selling price is not recorded, it seems that Sir Richard parted with the house for a sum significantly below its market value. Lady Anne Strafford proudly reported that everyone who saw the property claimed that it was 'the cheapest house in town', whilst her mother-in-law, Lady Wentworth, commented on Sir Richard's 'folly' in parting with it.[817] Thomas was unable to

[813] J. Swift, *Journal to Stella*, ed. H. Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), vol.1, p.351: Letter XXIX, September 1711.

[814] In a letter to Lord Berkeley of Stratton dated 'December 1714', Lord Strafford indicated that access to his wife's fortune was tightly controlled: 'I don't pretend to plead poverty but it is all so hid by marriage settlements that I can't dispose of one farthing of my capital.' See Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p.29 and p.33.

[815] BL Add MS 22225, f.112: Lady W to TW, 25 November 1711.

[816] BL Add MS 31144, f.66: Sir Henry Johnson to TW, 26 September 1711. In this letter, Sir Henry refers to a payment of £2100 although it is not clear whether this relates directly to the purchase of the house.

[817] BL Add MS 22226, f.17: Lady Anne Strafford (hereafter Lady S) to TW, 5 November 1711. BL Add MS 63474, ff.123-124: Agreement for Sir R Childs house: This undated draft agreement states that Lord

manage the final negotiations with Sir Richard as he was obliged to return to the Hague to carry out his responsibilities as British Ambassador there. He therefore relied on his new wife, Sir Henry, and two of his employees, Captain Ellison and Captain Powell, to act on his behalf.[818]

Lady Anne Strafford's letters dating from this period reveal that both she and Sir Richard Child's wife, Dorothy, also played assertive roles in these negotiations. After visiting the house for the first time on 16 October 1711, she informed her husband that she was 'extremly pleased with it'.[819] Her satisfaction in acquiring the house was most likely enhanced by Dorothy's evident reluctance to part with it. As Lady Strafford reported: 'she [Dorothy] scold'd at him before me for selling the house for twas A trouble wholy of his own creating'.[820] Although Lady Child had failed to prevent her husband from selling the house, it seems that she was able to exert influence when it came to negotiations over the fixtures and fittings. In a letter to Lord Strafford dated 16 October 1711, Captain Ellison reported: 'I doe not find […] that wee shall gett ye locks to ye dores nor anything; his steward, Lady & sister are sharp', insinuating that Sir Richard's female relations were responsible for his inflexible behaviour. Moreover, Lady Strafford had singled out certain features of the décor which she hoped to retain, including 'the picktures over the Doors & Glasses', some

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Strafford promised to deliver 'tallys for the sum of four thousand pound' to Sir Richard; BL Add MS 22225, f.108: Lady W to TW, November 1711.

[818] Whilst Ellison took responsibility for raising the funds to buy the house and organising the survey, Powell appears to have been charged with negotiating directly with Sir Richard over the final details. BL Add MS 22232, f.333: Ellison to TW, 6 October 1711.

[819] BL Add MS 22226, f.5: Lady Strafford to TW, 19 October 1711.

[820] *Ibid*. Dorothy (née Glynne) married Sir Richard Child in 1703. Like Lady Strafford, Dorothy Glynne had brought a considerable fortune to her marriage. See H. Armstrong, 'The Lost Landscapes and Interiorscapes of the Eighteenth-Century Estate: Reconstructing Wanstead House and its Grounds' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 2016), p.108.

'very handsome' marble tables, and some 'Giult Leathere [hangings] the Handsomest I ever see'.[821] Despite her attempts to win the vendors over with excessive compliments, she was disappointed when Sir Richard asked as much for these items as they had cost him, 'which I can never give for second hand furniture'.[822] Meanwhile, Sir Henry described the Childs as 'mighty Trifflers about every thing', and 'verry desirous of going of[f] from their Bargaine'.[823]

Henry Johnson's active involvement and support of his daughter during this period provides an illuminating example of the strong relationship which often persisted between a wife and her natal family.[824] Writing to Lord Strafford in September 1711, Sir Henry had promised to be 'as good a Steward as I can for you & my Dear Daughter'.[825] He even offered to act as a guarantor so that she could move in before the contracts were exchanged: 'I have sent to Sr R[ichard] Child to tell him yt I will be security yt he shall not suffer by clearing ye House & Letting my da[u]ghter come in before ye writings are signed'.[826] Thanks to such efforts, he was able to report three weeks later: '[Lady Strafford] is gott at last into ther house & Capt Powell & my self doe all wee can to gett every thing ready & in order as soon as possible and I will see yt nothing shall be wanting. Wee dine at one or ye other's houses every day'.[827] Henry's affection for his daughter, combined with his considerable wealth, meant that

[821] BL Add MS 22226, f.5: Lady S to TW, 19 October 1711.

[822] *Ibid.*

[823] BL Add MS 31144, f.71: Sir Henry Johnson to TW, 19 October 1711.

[824] Note also the relationship between the widowed Lady Irwin and her father, the Earl of Carlisle, in the previous chapter.

[825] BL Add MS 31144, f.58: Henry Johnson to TW, 19 September 1711.

[826] BL Add MS 31144, f.77: Henry Johnson to TW, 28 October 1711.

[827] BL Add MS 31144, f.81: Henry Johnson to TW, 20 November 1711.

he remained a prominent figure in her life as a married woman until his death in 1719.[828]

There is little surviving material to help us understand the original appearance and layout of the Straffords' new house, prior to its subsequent rebuilding by their son in 1748. However, we can gain an impression of its front to the square from two surviving prints (figs 5.3 and 5.4). These indicate that the house was four bays wide and arranged over three storeys with gabled windows in the garrets above. Lady Strafford's letters offer us some insight into the arrangement of the rooms. Soon after taking up residence there, she informed her husband that she did not intend to furnish the drawing room and dining room on the first floor until his return.[829] Meanwhile, the ground floor included a parlour, where she dined, and a dressing room, where she saw company during her husband's absence.[830] The property also had two staircases: the great stairs which led to the principal chambers on the upper floor, and an additional back staircase.[831]

A number of surviving accounts relating to the refurbishment of the property, mostly carried out during the summer of 1712, shed further light on the distribution of the rooms. In addition to those mentioned above, there is reference to some less-public areas, including a 'baithing room' and a nursery.[832] There also appears to have been

[828] See Retford, *Conversation Piece,* p.225: 'Affinal kin on both sides of a marital relationship could be crucial players in the couple's life - although much depended on how influential and/or wealthy those kin happened to be.' See also Perry, *Novel Relations,* p.89.

[829] BL Add MS 22226, f.11: Lady S to TW, 28 October 1711. See also Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.40.

[830] BL Add MS 22226, f.218: Lady S to TW, 16 September 1712. In this letter Lady Strafford expresses her intention to place a Japan cabinet in the dressing room 'for that's where I see company.'

[831] BL Add MS 22226, f.85: Lady S to TW, 29 July 1712.

[832] BL Add MS 22254, ff.3-19: Bills relating to work carried out at 5 St James's Square by carpenters, plasterers, and glaziers during 1712.

ample accommodation for servants. A glazier's bill of 1725 reveals that this included a servants' hall, a butler's room, a steward's dining room and a housekeeper's room in the basement, with the garrets providing sleeping accommodation for the footmen and maids.[833] Furthermore, service quarters were located to the rear of the house towards German Street (later known as Jermyn Street), providing coach houses, stables and laundry rooms. The house's position in the corner of the square thus conveniently allowed additional accommodation for outbuildings in the rectangular space between 5 and 4 St James's Square (fig.5.5).[834] As noted by Rachel Stewart, coach houses and stables were essential facilities for 'maintaining the level of equipage' required to make a proper figure in town.[835] The property also benefited from its own garden, considered by Lord Strafford's friend, Lord Berkeley, to be 'such an advantage in a town crowded with buildings'.[836]

Setting up Home

It was to be several months before Lord Strafford was able to join his wife in the new house.[837] Consequently she was largely responsible for overseeing the arrangements for decorating and furnishing the interior. Amanda Vickery has drawn attention to the significance of women's decorative choices in this period, noting: 'The denial of a woman's taste boded ill for her happiness and autonomy in marriage.'[838] Lady

[833] BL Add MS 22254, f.14: Glazier's bill, 26 February 1725.

[834] BL Add MS 22226, f.25: Lady S to TW, 20 November 1711.

[835] Stewart, *Town House*, p.81.

[836] BL Add MS 22220, f.84: Lord Berkeley to TW, 18 August 1713.

[837] It is not clear when Lord Strafford first stayed in 5 St James's Square. His personal correspondence suggests that he remained in the Hague from October 1711 to November 1713. During this two-year period, Lady Strafford, made two trips to stay with him, firstly in May/June 1712, and again from April to December 1713.

[838] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p.103.

Strafford appears to have been fortunate in this regard. Indeed, she was not afraid to contradict her husband if she disagreed with his proposals. In June 1712, she wrote, 'I don't much admire your fancy in hanging the Drawing room with tapstry', arguing that plain damask would be more suitable.[839] Likewise, when Thomas planned to decorate the walls of the staircase with a mural cycle similar to that at Buckingham House, Lady Strafford attempted to dissuade him, commenting: 'as you have so many Picktures I thinke you need not have the Stair Case painted'.[840] It seems that Thomas complied with her suggestion since, in September 1712, she asked him to send 'word if you'd have me have the Pickturs hung up Again' since the walls of the staircase were now 'very dry'.[841] As noted by Hannah Greig, Lady Strafford was also concerned that their new house should compare favourably with other aristocratic homes in London's West End.[842] During the summer of 1712, she paid a visit to the newly completed Marlborough House which she described as 'extremly fine'. She was particularly impressed by the 'great Brances for the midle of the rooms in imitation of Plate in wood silver'd or gilded over', suggesting to her husband that they might decorate their own great dining room in a similar manner.[843] Moreover, when her husband sent over two japanned cabinets for the best bedchamber, she wrote 'I am mightly pleased wth them […] I never see but won larger & that is the D of Marlborough's.'[844] As this

[839] BL Add MS 22226, f.191: Lady S to TW, 8 August 1712.

[840] BL Add MS 22226, f.299: Lady S to TW, 19 February 1712; f.139: Lady S to TW, 11 April 1712. In addition to the collection of paintings accumulated in Italy in 1709, Thomas had purchased several paintings in Holland. In 1712, many of these were shipped to his house in London during his absence. Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, p.221.

[841] BL Add MS 22226, f.223: Lady S to TW, 23 Sept 1712.

[842] For a more comprehensive discussion of this theme, see Greig, *Beau Monde*, pp.41-45; See also Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, pp.209-230.

[843] BL Add MS 22226, f.203: Lady S to TW, 29 August 1712.

[844] BL Add MS 22226, f.254: Lady S to TW, 26 December 1712.

suggests, Lady Strafford appears to have regarded Marlborough House as one of the most impressive and fashionable interiors in the West End.

Hostess and Housekeeper

After taking up residence in 5 St James's Square, Lady Strafford made a priority of opening up her home to visitors. This earned her the praise of Lady Wentworth, who wrote to her son: 'Lady Strafford has al the fyne Ladys in town to visitt her & she is in great state & order as can be; it would highly delight you to see how handsom, neet & noble she livs'.[845] Such visiting, usually centred on tea drinking, was a crucial mode of female sociability in this period.[846] Lady Strafford evidently used the convention to cultivate an acquaintance with the wives of significant politicians and women with influence over the Queen, realising that such relationships could potentially be advantageous to her husband's career, and so their shared fortunes. During the first few months in the house, she recorded visits from several such ladies, including the Duchess of Somerset (groom of the stool), Lady Oxford (wife of the Lord Treasurer), and Lady Masham (the Queen's latest favourite) indicating the strategic nature of her social networking.[847]

It is notable that, in her praise of Lady Strafford, Lady Wentworth credited her with the ability to strike an appropriate balance between efficient management and fashionable display.[848] On the one hand, Anne was expected to live in a 'handsome' and 'noble' manner as befitted her rank as a Countess. On the other, she was expected

[845] BL Add MS 22225, f.104: Lady W to TW, 13 November 1711.

[846] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p.14.

[847] BL Add MS 22226, f.37: Lady S to TW, 30 November 1711 and f.43: Lady S to TW, 11 December 1711. For a full discussion on Lady Strafford's political networking, see Greig, *Beau Monde*, pp.151-55.

[848] See Tague, *Women of Quality*, p.140.

to temper such display with the discipline and restraint implied by the word 'neet'.[849] In Lady Strafford's letters to her husband, she frequently drew attention to her frugality. For example, in telling him of her intention only to use the lower floor of the house during his absence, she pointed out that this would 'make the expences every way more easy', since there would be no requirement to install candles and sconces on the staircase and in the upper rooms.[850] Later in the same letter, she pointed out how resourceful she had been in recycling his robes to cover the dining room chairs, rather than ordering new fabric. Such emphasis on financial restraint echoes the self-presentation of the Duchess of Marlborough, who recorded having used textiles from her clothes to furnish a bedchamber at Blenheim.[851] The merits of frugality were encouraged in both men and women through publications such as William de Britaine's *Human Prudence* (first compiled in 1680) which affirmed that 'Frugality and Industry' were the 'Two Hands of Fortune'.[852] However, these ideas were also inflected by the discourse condemning women's supposed susceptibility to extravagance and wastefulness.[853] According to marital law, a wife's house and its contents legally belonged to her spouse. Writers of conduct manuals therefore cautioned their female readers that to overspend was literally to steal from their husbands.[854]

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[849] Vickery notes that neatness connoted a recognised manner of decoration that made claims to taste, but not ostentatious grandeur. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p.180.

[850] BL Add MS 22226, f.11: Lady S to TW, 28 October 1711.

[851] BL Add MS 61473: 'Inventory of Blenheim Palace and Marlborough House, 1740'.

[852] William De Britaine, *Human Prudence: or, the art by which a man may raise himself and his fortune to grandeur* (London, 1702), p.88.

[853] Stewart, *Town House*, p.110. London was considered to be a particularly dangerous environment for women who could fall prey to its beguiling luxuries.

[854] Tague, *Women of Quality*, p.106. For example, in *The Ladies Calling* (the most influential conduct manual of the late 17th century), Richard Allestree urges the virtuous wife 'not to wast and embezle her

Lady Strafford's efforts to manage household expenditure effectively were endorsed by Ellison, the steward, who reported to his master: 'I find my Lady extreamly inclined to be as saving as possible'.[855] However, it seems that Lord Strafford did, on occasion, find cause to complain about the housekeeping bills, prompting his wife to defend herself: 'I am sorry you think the house keeping Dear for believe me I never have any more then just enough for the famely & that never is whats Dear nor I never have any body to dine with me but my Lady W[entworth] who there is never the more provoid'd for.'[856] In an effort to highlight her financial restraint, she drew his attention to the decadent lifestyle of her sister-in-law, Lady Isabella Arundell, who lived in a grand house in Arlington Street: 'I confess tis a way I can't like in spending all the mony won has in eating & drinking wch I doe realy think she will doe & run in debt'.[857]

For elite women, the effective government of servants was considered a crucial part of managing a household.[858] Lady Strafford liked to make a good impression, even in visits from family members. When preparing the house for the arrival of her father and stepmother, she wrote: 'I have routed my maids about this two days to have all the house prodigious neat.'[859] Moreover, the physical presentation of the servants was important for the reputation of the family. Eager to conform to the fashionable

husbands estate'. He criticised ladies who showed 'so much extravagance not only in their own dress, but that of their houses and apartments,' [Attrib. R. Allestree], *The Ladies Calling* (Oxford, 1673), 'Part II: Of Wives'.

[855] BL Add MS 22232, f.367: Ellison to TW, 11 December 1711.

[856] BL Add MS 22226, f.89: Lady S to TW, 4 March 1712.

[857] BL Add MS 22226, f.302: Lady S to TW, 28 February 1712. BL Add MS 31143, f.188, Lady W to TW, 20 December 1706. Lady Wentworth described Lady Arundell's new house as being 'amongst the great people in Arllington Street.' See also chapter 2.

[858] Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.127.

[859] BL Add MS 22226, f.157: Lady S to TW, 6 May 1712.

practice of the town, Lady Strafford made her male servants 'gray surtouts since tis what every body dos here'.[860] In her dealings with the staff, she endeavoured to assert her authority, whilst at the same time showing fairness and respect: 'I shall never agree to be impos'd on by my servants to have the name of being good humour'd for as I'll do what is fitting by them I'll make them do so by me.'[861] In the management of the household, she collaborated closely with Ellison, who laid the household account in her chamber every night for approval.[862] When they decided, together, to dismiss Bambridge, the clerk of the kitchen, for mismanaging the accounts, she seemed regretful, believing Bambridge's errors were 'more out of Neglect than knavishness'.[863] The case of her porter proved less ambiguous. In March 1713 she discovered that, since she had lain-in for the birth of her child, this employee had been 'always Drunk wch was enough to fire the house & anothere great crime is he us'd to take in won of the begger wenches of A night after the fameley was A bed & keep her all night with him so that by that means the house might be robed.'[864] The need to maintain discipline over the servants was essential, not only for the reputation of the family, but also for the safety and security of the household.

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[860] BL Add MS 22226, f.248: Lady S to TW, 19 December 1712. This can be compared to the expenses laid out on livery for the Duchess of Norfolk's servants at Arlington Street (chapter 2).

[861] BL Add MS 22226, f.25: Lady S to TW, 20 November 1711. As noted by Tague, such comments suggest Lady Strafford was strongly influenced by the language of contemporary conduct books in relation to the appropriate treatment of servants. Tague, *Women of Quality*, p.118. See also Sykes, *Private Palaces*, p.154.

[862] For further discussion on the role and status of stewards in aristocratic households, see J. Stobart and M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.187-94: Stewards often played a crucial role in 'managing resources and attempting to keep income and outgoings in balance'.

[863] BL Add MS 22226, f.216: Lady S to TW, 12 September 1712.

[864] BL Add MS 22226, f.101: Lady S to TW, 17 March 1713.

Kinship and Cohabitation:

As noted by Tadmor, marriage in this period entailed not only the alliance of two kinship groups, but also their incorporation.[865] Parents could recognise the husbands and wives of their offspring as 'sons' and 'daughters', and siblings could recognise their siblings' spouses as 'brothers' and 'sisters'. Both Tadmor and Ruth Perry have highlighted the value of epistolary and literary sources in understanding these eighteenth-century notions of kinship, as they often illuminate the strong ties which existed between members of extended families.[866] This section engages with this scholarship by considering the significance of extended family relations in the context of Lord and Lady Strafford's residence in St James's Square.

The union of Thomas Wentworth and Anne Johnson had wide-reaching implications for their respective families, especially their female relatives. As the eldest brother of the six surviving siblings of the Wentworth family, Thomas had a responsibility for the welfare of both his mother and his youngest unmarried sister, Betty, who relied on him for financial support. Meanwhile, Lady Strafford considered it her duty to care for her elderly grandmother, Lady Alice Rawstorne (fig.5.2). The latter had performed a prominent role in Lady Strafford's upbringing due to the death

[865] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p.133. For a discussion of the different historiographical approaches to kinship in England from the early modern period onwards, see Tadmor, 'Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run: Reflections on Continuity and Change', *Continuity and Change*, 25:1 (May 2010), pp.15-48. Adopting a 'neo-revisionist' approach towards the study of kinship, Tadmor highlights the importance of 'enmeshed patterns of kinship' rather than focusing on the isolated nuclear family.
[866] Perry, *Novel Relations*, p.192. See also Retford, *Conversation Piece*, p.219. Retford notes that 'in-laws' form a notable and persistent presence in the conversation piece, proving the concept of the nuclear family distinctly inadequate.

of her mother in childbirth.[867] Such was the bond between grandmother and granddaughter that Lady Strafford invited Lady Rawstorne to live with her in St James's Square almost immediately after taking up residence there herself in November 1711. Lady Rawstorne accepted the invitation and remained in the household until her death almost two years later.[868]

It seems likely that Lord Strafford agreed to this arrangement on the basis that his wife was Lady Rawstorne's presumptive heir. As long as she was living with her granddaughter, there was less chance of her coming under the influence of other hopeful claimants to her fortune. Ellison appears to have been particularly conscious of this issue. In a letter to Lord Strafford he cautioned; 'as a little thing disoblidges such tutchey old [women?], verry often they make wills different to expectation of those that thinke they deserve all or ye most'.[869] Meanwhile, Lady Strafford attempted to convince her husband of her grandmother's generosity:

> Lady Rawstorn has given me two hundered giuneys to furnish her Apartment with tho what she desires will not com to near that […] what of that mony is left I intend to lay out in what is most wanting in the house.[870]

However, it appears that Lord Strafford put pressure on his wife to extract financial promises from her grandmother. In December 1712, Lady Strafford informed him: 'I have spoke to Lady Rawstorn About the 400 pound a year & she bids me asure you

[867] Lady Strafford's mother had died as a result of complications after giving birth to Anne (her only child) in *c.*1684.

[868] As noted by Stewart, the elderly or infirm were often tempted to take up residence in London where they had access to medical expertise. Stewart, *Town House*, p.34.

[869] BL Add MS 22233, f.57: Ellison to TW, 28 March 1712.

[870] BL Add MS 22226, f.11: Lady S to TW, 28 October 1711.

from her that nothing shall be wanting in her part for ethere of our good'.[871] Although her grandmother persisted in her stubborn refusal to make a will, dying intestate at the St James's Square house in October 1713, Lady Strafford did eventually secure her fortune after the estate went into administration.[872]

During the early years of Lady Strafford's residence in 5 St James's Square, the composition of the household was often in flux. Her father and mother-in-law were both frequent visitors and appear to have enjoyed one another's company, prompting Lady Strafford to describe them as 'very great' together.[873] Meanwhile Lady Wentworth was able to entertain Lady Rawstorne when her daughter-in-law went out visiting. At first, this arrangement appears to have proved satisfactory for all three women, prompting Lady Strafford to report to her husband: 'Lady Rawstorn & she [Lady Wentworth] are the best company in the world for they tell storys of an houre long to won another when I'm Abrod.'[874] However, their harmonious relationship was not to last. The following summer, Lady Wentworth came to stay in the St James's Square house for several weeks whilst her own lodgings at the Cockpit were being repaired. During this period of cohabitation, she was obliged to seek refuge from Lady Rawstorne's ill humour: 'I am now in ye nursery & thear is noe other room for me for the other room is just by my Lady [Rawstorne] & it will be a prisson; one must never stir for fear of angring her'.[875] Lady Strafford struggled to maintain harmony. Writing to her husband that same month, she described the two women as 'both cross in there turn with won anothere', but assured him that she 'never spoke a word of nethere

[871] BL Add MS 22226, f.241: Lady S to TW, 9 December 1712.

[872] TNA PRO, PROB 6/89: Administration Act Book: Dame Alice Rawstorn, November 1713.

[873] BL Add MS 22226, f.39: Lady S to TW, 4 December 1711; f.207: Lady S to TW, 4 September 1712.

[874] BL Add MS 22226, f.23: Lady S to TW, 16 November 1711.

[875] BL Add MS 22225, f.149: Lady S to TW, 5 August 1712.

side'.[876] Such inter-generational cohabitation between members of the extended family could clearly lead to considerable strain in the domestic environment. The presence of wealthy female relatives in the household also complicated the structures of patriarchal authority. Even Lord Strafford recognised the need to humour Lady Rawstorne if he hoped to benefit from her death. And when he wished Lady Strafford to join him in the Hague, he was obliged to request her grandmother's permission.[877]

Another female member of the extended family to enter the household in 1712 was 'Sister Betty', Lord Strafford's youngest sister.[878] Lady Wentworth evidently harboured some concerns about her daughter, whom she judged 'very good Natured but unpollished'. She was hopeful that Betty would benefit from a period of co-residence with Thomas's accomplished new wife, since 'none is better bred in the world then Lady Strafford or has more witt or better understanding'.[879] Sister Betty's position in the household was therefore that of an unmarried dependant, but Lady Strafford went to some trouble to accommodate her.[880] According to Lady Wentworth, she had 'got her room hung & a fyne great in it & it is as handsome a room & makse as great a show as any room in the house.'[881] Betty also accompanied Lady Stafford on her daily round of visiting, including visits to the opera and the royal court: 'I carry her

[876] BL Add MS 22226, f.197: Lady S to TW, 17 August 1712.

[877] BL Add MS 22226, f.39: Lady S to TW, 4 December 1711.

[878] Sources differ over Elizabeth Wentworth's date of birth but it seems she was born around 1693, making her about nineteen years old at the time she came to live in St James's Square.

[879] BL Add MS 22225, ff.342-44, Lady W to TW, January 1712.

[880] See Perry, *Novel Relations*, p.142: 'Taking care of one's blood relatives […] particularly where the law did not require it, was coming to be seen as the heart and soul of proper feeling.' Retford further notes that 'the fictional brother who, on his marriage, does not evict the spinster sister whom he has been supporting within his household is held up as a praiseworthy figure.' Retford, *Conversation Piece*, p.223.

[881] BL Add MS 22225, f.246: Lady W to TW, n.d. [January 1713].

every where with me & take the liberty to tell her faults which she seems to take very well'.[882] Of course Lady Wentworth's ultimate goal was for her daughter to find a suitable husband, although it was some time before she achieved this. Betty remined single until her marriage to John Arundell, 4th Baron Arundell of Trerice, in 1722.[883] It does, however, seem that Betty's presence in the household was of mutual benefit to both her and Lady Strafford. When the latter was recuperating after the birth of her first child, Betty was her constant companion: 'Sister Betty has been very good humored to me & keept at home with me ever since I lay inn'.[884]

Lady Strafford's Lying-in

As noted in relation to the Whitehall neighbourhood, elite women typically favoured London over their country residences for giving birth and the ensuing ritual of lying-in. Although the country house was more closely associated with heritage and lineage, the practical reasons for giving birth in London proved far more significant.[885] Not only were professional doctors and midwives close at hand, but kinship networks in the neighbourhood could also be a source of support as seen in chapter 3. Moreover, elite women were able to receive visits during their lying-in from fellow members of the aristocracy, reinforcing their social standing and political connectivity.

The ritual of lying-in lasted for four weeks, during which aristocratic women had the opportunity to recuperate in a lavishly prepared domestic setting. At the end of that period, the christening ceremony would typically take place in the bedroom, with

[882] BL Add MS 22226, f.77: Lady S to TW, 25 January 1712.

[883] Sister Betty is not to be confused with her elder sister, Isabella (mentioned above), who also became Lady Arundell, after her marriage to Francis Arundell of Stoke Bruerne.

[884] BL Add MS 22226, f.115: Lady S to TW, 27 March 1713.

[885] Stewart, *Town House,* p.34.

the mother and child posing in a richly apparelled bed.[886] It appears that Lady Strafford was eager to put on an impressive display for these rituals. In July 1712, when she was only in the second month of her pregnancy, Ellison reported to Lord Strafford:

> her Lad[yshi]p wishes extreamly you woud order her to fit the best bed chamber with looking glass between the windows […] that apartment is like to be well furnished for her Lad[yshi]p like all other Ladys will pique her self upon making a fine appearance at her lying in.[887]

Six months later, Lady Strafford was able to report to her husband: 'The yellow Damask Bed is now up. I am very Glad this upholsterer made it for I think it one of the handsomest made Beds I ever see'.[888] Meanwhile, Lady Rawstorne had spent £100 on a quilt and pillows for her granddaughter's bed.[889] The drawing room and dining room, located on the same level as the best bedchamber, were also made ready for the reception of visitors.[890] Notably, Lady Strafford expressed a wish 'not to have the three rooms alike', indicating that she considered them as a sequence of spaces to be experienced in turn.[891] Consequently, whilst she was happy for the bedchamber and dining room to be adorned with tapestry, she chose to decorate the drawing room with

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[886] Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p.231.

[887] BL Add MS 22233, f.102: Ellison to TW, July 1712. As noted by Adrian Wilson, wealthy mothers made an expensive display of their lying-in chamber as a means of demonstrating their social status. A.Wilson, *Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England 1660-1770* (London: UCL Press, 1995), p.28.

[888] BL Add MS 22226, f.281: Lady S to TW, 30 January 1713.

[889] BL Add MS 22225, f.395: Lady S to TW, 20 March 1713.

[890] As noted earlier, during the early months in the house, Lady Strafford had restricted her activity to the rooms on the ground floor.

[891] BL Add MS 22226, f.191: Lady S to TW, 8 August 1712. See Howard, 'You never saw such a scene' for comparable example of contrasting spaces at Norfolk House.

'a figured Cafaw', made so fine as to resemble velvet.[892] For the landing or 'passage' connecting these three rooms, she decided on gilt leather hangings.[893] Despite Lady Strafford's professed restraint in managing household expenses, the costs incurred here were considerable. Thomas later complained to his steward about the exorbitant bill sent by the upholsterer amounting to '£679: 7*s* 6*d* for furnishing severall roomes', including £201: 19*s* 7*d* for the great bedchamber.[894] However, the expensive refurbishment did have a lasting effect on these interiors, which later provided the setting for the grand assemblies hosted by the Straffords during the 1720s and 30s.

In addition to these costly furnishings, Lady Strafford attached considerable importance to the conspicuous display of silver plate in the principal reception rooms.[895] This was an important status symbol during the early decades of the eighteenth century, such as the toilet set belonging to Mary, 8th Duchess of Norfolk, and the plate on display at Marlborough House during the wedding reception of Lady Diana Spencer in 1731.[896] An account of Lord Strafford's plate recorded by Ellison in September 1712 lists various items, including: a quantity of 'gilt plate for Lady Straffords Dressing table', costing £526: 3*s* and a 'large cup & cistern & salver', costing £207.[897] Lady Strafford also reported that the Queen's goldsmith, Mr Shales,

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[892] BL Add MS 22226, f.198: Lady S to TW, 17 August 1712. 'Caffaw' refers to caffoy - a fabric similar to damask used for hangings in 18th century.

[893] *Ibid.*

[894] BL Add MS 22233, f.212: Ellison to TW, 31 March 1713.

[895] BL Add MS 22226, f.189: Lady S to TW, 5 August 1712: 'there should be silver both in the bed chamber & drawing room.'

[896] See Chapters 1 and 2. As noted by Charles Saumarez Smith, during the 1690s, a number of skilled Huguenot silversmiths had arrived in the capital, generating the fashion for the display of finely crafted silverware in elite London interiors. Saumarez-Smith, *Rise of Design*, p.20.

[897] See chapter 1 on the silver toilet set given to Mary Howard, Duchess of Norfolk on the occasion of her wedding in 1709.

had been ‘very civill’ in lending her ‘a great deal of plate’ to supplement their own collection during the visiting period (fig.5.6).[898]

The preparations for receiving visitors were all made in advance of the baby’s arrival. However, the actual birth itself, on 23 February 1713, was a much more private affair, engendering female collectivity.[899] Throughout her labour, Lady Strafford was attended by a female midwife and her mother-in-law, with the male midwife, Dr Chamberlin, only present for the final stages.[900] Despite her disappointment that the child was a girl, Lady Wentworth delivered a positive report to her son, describing his baby daughter (Lady Anne) as ‘very prety & very fair very lykly to liv’. She also reassured him that ‘al things are very handsom & in great order’, showing the importance she attached to the arrangement of the domestic setting.[901] Lady Rawstorne remained in the house throughout the lying-in period, prompting Lady Wentworth to assure her son: ‘I am soe farr from contradickting Lady Roysten [Rawstorne] that upon my word I never medle with ether Lady or childe.’[902]

As noted by Judith Lewis, the traditional aristocratic postpartum confinement was highly ritualized until about 1770. The mother’s chamber would typically be dark

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[898] BL Add MS 22226, f.115, Lady S to TW, 27 March 1713. In his role as a high-ranking diplomat, Lord Strafford was granted an entitlement of plate from the Jewel Office. Sothebys online catalogue, 2010: www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2010/treasures-aristocratic-heirlooms-l10307/lot.8.html [accessed 2 November 2020].

[899] Wilson, *Making of Man-Midwifery*, p.25

[900] BL Add MS 22225, f.375: Lady W to TW, 24 February 1713. Lady Wentworth makes no mention of Lady Rawstorne being present at the birth, although she was still resident in the house at this time. Lewis notes that ‘no man entered the lying-in chamber during the first two weeks after birth; ceremonial visits of close male relatives were allowed during the third week.’ J. Lewis, *In the Family Way Way: Childbearing in the British Aristocracy, 1760-1860* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986), p.197.

[901] BL Add MS 22225, f.375: Lady W to TW, 24 February 1713.

[902] BL Add MS 22225, f.388, Lady W to TW, 10 March 1713.

and airless, with the windows covered and tightly sealed, and even the keyholes covered for a period of eight to ten days.[903] Lady Wentworth's letters to her son provide us with some insight into various stages of the ritual. Visiting her daughter-in-law about a week after the birth, she found her sitting up 'in the great chaer loocking better then I ever see her loock in my Life & Little Lady Anne in her lap.'[904] A week later, she wrote: 'I am to dyne with your Lady today in her chamber of a boyled chicken' suggesting that Lady Strafford was still confined to her bedchamber, but able to move around the room.[905] As noted by Lewis, women typically abstained from activities such as writing letters until this 'moving about' stage.[906] When she was finally permitted to pen a letter to her husband, Lady Strafford wrote: 'The greatest pleasure my Dearest Life I have had since I was brought to bed is the Liberty they have now given me of writing to you to tell you how much I love you'.[907]

Towards the end of the lying-in period, the final preparations were made for the reception of Lady Strafford's elite guests. At this point, the bedchamber was transformed from a private setting into a scene of lavish display. Writing to her son on the eve of the christening, Lady Wentworth proudly informed him:

> To morroe Lady Anne will be a cristian & she and her mother will be the lovlist sight I ever see & I daer say thear is none of ye Dutchisis has or can make a nobler show then they will doe.[908]

[903] Lewis, *In the Family Way*, p.193

[904] BL Add MS 22225, f.383: Lady W to TW, 3 March 1713.

[905] BL Add MS 22225, f.387: Lady W to TW, 10 March 1713

[906] Lewis, *In the Family Way*, p.197.

[907] BL Add MS 22226, f.93: Lady S to TW, 10 March 1713.

[908] BL Add MS 22225, f.395: Lady W to TW, 20 March 1713.

The christening was all the more prestigious since the Queen herself had agreed to stand godmother to the child. As noted by Helen Jacobsen, Lord Strafford's service as a diplomat had won him considerable royal favour, thus emboldening him to request such an honour for his family.[909] Although the Queen did not attend in person, she sent one of her ladies of the bedchamber, Lady Catherine Hyde, in her place.[910] Moreover, in the days following the ceremony, Lady Strafford reported to her husband; 'all the Queen's Ladys [have] been here & every body admires our house […] a great many is gon Away with the thoughts that the gilt leather is gold brocaded stuff'.[911] Such comments indicate that the material display of the house was just as important as the presentation of the mother and child. Moreover, as the wife of a diplomat, Lady Strafford was honoured by visits from the French, Spanish and Venetian Ambasadors, after which she reported; 'they all say'd they thought our house the handsomest they had seen in town.[912] This illustrious succession of visiting royal courtiers and foreign diplomats represented a clear manifestation of Lord and Lady Strafford's rank and political importance. It therefore appears that Lady Strafford was highly successful in using the ritual surrounding the birth of her first child to enhance the family's standing both socially and politically, despite her husband's prolonged absence.

[909] Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, p.229.

[910] BL Add MS 31144, f.358: Peter Wentworth to TW, 10 March 1713: 'The Queen […] bid me present her service to my Lady Strafford & that she wou'd be Godmother'; BL Add MS 31144, f.362: same to same, 20 March 1713.

[911] BL Add MS 22226, f.115: Lady S to TW, 27 March 1713. As already noted, the passageway (or landing) was decorated with gilt leather hangings.

[912] BL Add MS 22226, f.115: Lady S to TW, 27 March 1713.

Death of Lady Rawstorne

Only a month after the christening, Lady Strafford left St James's Square to visit her husband in the Hague, leaving her new baby daughter and nurse in the house with Lady Rawstorne. Just prior to her departure, she assured her husband: 'Lady Rawstorn is so well contented as you can't emagin & fond of the child & Mr Elleson & I have settled matters so well in the house that I hope we shan't be imposed on.'[913] Her decision to leave the child and its nurse in London was most likely prompted by various practical concerns. Whilst in the capital, the child could remain under the watchful eye of Dr Chamberlin.[914] Moreover, family members and friends could visit and keep an eye on the new arrival. Not surprisingly, the most frequent visitor was Lady Wentworth, who came to see her granddaughter every day. On 1 May 1713, she reported to her son: 'Last night Lady Anne [the baby] & Lady Roysten was very well […] Lady Anglesee came to see Lady Anne & charged nurs to be very cairfull of her or els she would never forgiv her'.[915] As this suggests, such visits from peers in elite society helped to ensure that the nurse and servants were performing their duties efficiently. Although the Straffords continued to receive favourable reports about their daughter's progress, news of Lady Rawstorne was less positive. In September 1713, her health went rapidly into decline. Thomas consequently proposed to his mother that she should move into the house to help oversee the care of the child. However, perhaps understandably given her previous experience, Lady Wentworth was reluctant to do so:

[913] BL Add MS 22226, f.133: Lady S to TW, 7 April 1713.

[914] BL Add MS 22225, f.284: Lady W to TW, 12 May 1713. Lady Wentworth reported that Dr Chamberlin had visited the house on several occasions.

[915] BL Add MS 22225, f.276: Lady W to TW, 1 May 1713.

'should I goe to lye at the Squaer I am sure she [Lady Rawstone] would be very angree at it & say I come for a watch upon her & soe flye but into some spytfull way.'[916]

Lady Rawstorne died some time towards the end of October. Consequently, only seven months after the christening, 5 St James's Square became the site of a conversely sombre ritual. As noted by Mark Girouard, there were certain parallels between the ceremonies of christening and lying in state, as enacted in the early modern interior. Either the mother or the corpse would lie 'in suitably festive or funereal splendour', arranged on an elaborately decorated bed.[917] However, Lady Rawstorne's body was displayed in the parlour on the ground floor, rather than the bedchamber above, most likely on account of her status as a long-term resident of the household rather than its mistress or owner. A surviving account relating to the funeral reveals that £11: 2*s* was spent on '10 dozen of scutcheons for ye Room Parler & Alcove', whilst an additional £10 was laid out for 'mourning for ye Rooms Sconces & candles & Tapers.'[918] Lord Strafford travelled to London alone to oversee the funeral arrangements, leaving his wife (then in her second pregnancy) behind in the Hague. However, Lady Stafford urged her husband to ensure that everything was carried out with appropriate decorum: 'I hope you'll take care all things is don the same as if I ware in England for in the first place as she was my Grandmothere & in the next as all she had came to me I think I owe that to her memory'.[919]

[916] BL Add MS 22225, f.335: Lady W to TW, 2 October 1713.

[917] Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p.194.

[918] BL Add MS 22230, f.135: 'Things Necessary for ye Funeral of the Lady Rawstone'.

[919] BL Add MS 22226, f.364: Lady S to TW, 21 November 1713.

The Hanoverian Succession

The fortunes of the Strafford family, and consequently their status in London society, came under threat after the death of Queen Anne in 1714. Lord Strafford was immediately recalled from his post in the Hague and, in January 1715, the Whig-dominated Privy council attempted to impeach him for his involvement in the Treaty of Utrecht, alleging that he had corresponded with French enemies whilst serving the Queen.[920] Although he was never formally prosecuted, his political career effectively came to an end.[921] This has led scholars to conclude that the family then largely withdrew to their estate at Stainborough Hall (later Wentworth Castle).[922]

However, surviving evidence suggests a different story. It seems that, relatively early in the new reign, Lady Strafford was still spending time in London and, furthermore, socialising at the highest level. For example, in December 1717, she is recorded as 'taking the air in Hyde Parke' with the Prince and Princess of Wales.[923] Earlier that month, Prince George and his wife, Caroline, had been banned from St James's Palace by George I, obliging them to set up their own court at Leicester House.[924] By promenading with the royal couple in such a public space, Lady Strafford was surely proclaiming both her and her husband's support for this rival centre of royal power. Moreover, in April 1722, after the Countess had lain in for the birth of a long-

[920] From 1717, Strafford maintained a correspondence with the Pretender, who appointed him commander-in-chief of the Jacobite forces north of the Humber and bestowed on him the title duke of Strafford (5 June 1722). L and M. Frey, 'Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford (1672-1739) diplomatist and army officer', *ODNB* (2004), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/29059.

[921] *Ibid.* He was specifically excluded from the *Act of Grace* granted by George in 1717 and never held another office.

[922] See Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers,* p.35 and Greig, *Beau Monde*, p.39.

[923] *Post Boy*, 28-31 December 1717.

[924] Smith, *Georgian Monarchy*, p.199.

awaited son in St James's Square, she received the honour of a visit from Princess Caroline herself. According to the report, Lord Strafford arranged for 'her Royal Highness's servants, and those of her Retinue [to be] handsomely entertain'd', suggesting that the Straffords were deliberately courting favour with the new, rising generation of the royal family.[925]

It seems that Lord Strafford's professed loyalty to the Prince and Princess was not entirely genuine. There is strong evidence that he was a leading conspirator in the Atterbury Plot (1720-22), which sought to restore the Stuart dynasty to the British throne.[926] However, when the plot was discovered by Robert Walpole in May 1722, Thomas apparently destroyed his papers, thereby avoiding prosecution.[927] Like a number of his fellow aristocrats, he was most likely 'hedging his bets' by courting favour with both the Hanoverians and the Jacobites.[928] However, it seems that the Earl's damaged political career did not adversely affect either his or his wife's reputation in society. According to Mary Delany the couple hosted assemblies at St James's Square on a fortnightly basis throughout the 1720s and 1730s.[929] In this regard, the social position of the Straffords is comparable to that of the 8th Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, who hosted weekly assemblies in St James's Square after the Duke had been released from the Tower of London where he had been held on

[925] *Weekly Journal or British Gazeteer*, 14 April 1722.

[926] For Lord Strafford's association with Bishop Atterbury, see E. Cruickshanks and H. Erskine-Hill, *The Atterbury Plot* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.42-51.

[927] *Ibid*, p.127.

[928] See chapters 2 and 4.

[929] Writing in 1720, Delany reported that Lady Strafford held an assembly 'once a fortnight' in St James's Square. Later, in February 1728, she wrote to her sister: 'I have not been at an assemblée this winter, but I will go to my Lady Strafford's to put me in mind of some happy hours I have had there with you' Llanover, *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mrs Delany*, vol.1, p.67 and p.159.

suspicion of Jacobite activity in 1722-23. Both cases clearly demonstrate that rank usually prevailed over politics in London society.

Although very few of Lady Strafford's letters have survived from George I's reign, the Wentworth archive does contain a cache of letters which she wrote to her husband between 1729 and 1739. This correspondence reveals that Lady Strafford frequently stayed in St James's Square with her by then four children, whilst her husband was attending to his other estates.[930] By this stage in her life, Lady Strafford's primary concern was to promote the interests of her offspring, especially those of her only son, William (fig.5.7). She certainly took considerable pride in presenting him at the nearby court at St James's. Following his attendance at a royal ball in 1735 to celebrate the Duke of Cumberland's fourteenth birthday, she was delighted to report: 'the Queen cam directly up to me & say'd all my children are quite charmed with Lord Wentworth he is so civill & well bred & not like a child'.[931] By introducing William into royal society at an early age, his mother evidently hoped to reinforce his position as the future Earl of Strafford.

Lady Strafford's three daughters also benefited from their periods of residence in London, attending the various balls and assemblies, and making regular visits to the opera.[932] In 1733, the eldest, Lady Anne (1713-97), found an eligible husband in William Conolly (1706-54), nephew of the celebrated Speaker of the same name.[933]

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[930] By this date Lord Strafford had expanded his portfolio of properties. In 1717 he had purchased Boughton Hall in Northamptonshire, intending the property as a half-way house between London and Wentworth Castle. Following the death of his father-in-law, Henry Johnson, in 1719, he had inherited Friston Hall in Suffolk.

[931] BL Add MS 22226, f.422: Lady S to TW, 17 April 1735.

[932] See BL Add MS 31145, f.131: Lady S to TW, 8 January 1737

[933] William Conolly (commonly known as Speaker Conolly) (1662-1729) was one of the most powerful Irish political figures of his day.

The wedding took place in the nearby church of St James's, Piccadilly, making it likely that the reception was held at her parents' home in St James's Square.[934] After their marriage, Lady Anne spent much of the year at the Conolly's family estate, Castletown in County Kildare. However, writing to her brother from Castletown, she described how she liked to imagine herself in the company of her siblings in London: 'as others build castles in the air, mine are on a more solid foundation being place'd in St James square'.[935] It thus seems that, for Anne, the family's London town house was an important site of memories and attachments.

For Anne's younger sisters, meanwhile, the house not only provided a convenient base from which to participate in elite social events, but also a prime position from which to view comings and goings in the public space of the square. When Prince Frederick and his wife, Augusta, took up residence in Norfolk House in 1737, Lucy, the second eldest daughter, installed herself in the front room so that she could scrutinise the royal couple's movements: 'I have with pleasure starved myself these two mornings in [the] window in hopes to send your lordship some news about the Prince and Princess' (fig.5.8). Having witnessed various guests arriving at an assembly being held by her neighbours one Sunday afternoon, she reported to her father, 'there appear'd a good deal of company by the number of coaches; but all the servants says there's always double the number at your Assembly so your company will make a greater show in the Square then his Royal Highness's'.[936]

As Lucy's letter suggests, Lord and Lady Strafford's assemblies continued to be an important event in the elite social calendar throughout the 1730s. As late as

[934] *London Evening Post*, 26-28 April 1733.

[935] BL Add MS 72714, f.17: Anne Conolly to William Wentworth, n.d. [after 1739]

[936] Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p.535: Lucy Wentworth to Lord Strafford, 3 January 1738.

January 1739, a report in the *London Post* announced that the Earl of Strafford was about to commence his weekly assemblies in St James's Square.[937] However, this was to be their last season of entertaining. In November of that year, Lord Strafford died from kidney stones whilst at Wentworth Castle, whereupon William, his seventeen-year-old son, became the second Earl. In his will, Lord Strafford left his widow an annuity of £2000 per annum, in addition to a 'messuage and gardens in Twickenham' and the 'use of his house at St. James's Square until his son should come of age or marry'.[938] There is no record of the date when the dowager countess and her two unmarried daughters moved out of the house. Various letters from the family lawyers, addressed to Lady Strafford in St James's Square during the late months of 1740, indicate that she was still occupying the property at this time.[939] It seems most likely that she moved out immediately after her son's marriage to Lady Anne Campbell in 1741, as required by the terms of her husband's will. Certainly, at the time of her death in 1754, she was occupying a house in Albemarle Street.[940]

Part 3: Anne (née Campbell), 2nd Countess of Strafford (*c*.1720-85)

Anne (née Campbell), the second Countess of Strafford, occupied 5 St James's Square for forty-four years, making her period of residency even longer than that of her predecessor (fig.5.9). Seven years into her marriage to William, the house was entirely rebuilt according to the designs of Matthew Brettingham the elder, transforming it into

[937] *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 20 January 1739.

[938] Bedfordshire archives, X949/1: Copy of will of Thomas Earl of Strafford, 22 June 1732.

[939] See for example BL Add MS 22229, f.415 William Ingram to Lady Strafford, 20 December 1740.

[940] BL Add MS 22254, f.58: Matthew Lamb to William Wentworth, 3 October 1754: Lamb expresses an intention to purchase 'the house in Albermarle Street in which the late Ldy Strafford lived'.

one of the most fashionable and expensively decorated houses in the square. It might seem that the second countess was perfectly placed to adopt the mantle of her mother-in-law, exercising her taste in the construction of the interiors and furnishing of the new house. However, this was not to be the case. Lady Anne Campbell adopted a very different role from the first Lady Strafford, and was far less engaged with both the decoration and management of the house in St James's Square. Why was this the case?

For material on Anne Campbell, we are largely reliant on a useful, but at times clearly embroidered memoir written by her distant cousin, Lady Louisa Stuart, in 1827.[941] According to Stuart's narrative, the Campbell sisters had been raised in an environment 'dominated by the spirit of dulness', in which women were regarded as intellectually inferior to men. Of their father, John, 2nd Duke of Argyll (1680-1743), Lady Louisa writes: 'No one could be more master at home, where his decrees, once issued, were the nod of Jupiter'.[942] Meanwhile, their mother, the Duchess, is judged to have borne a grudge against her daughters 'for not being boys', with the result that she had taken little interest in their education.[943] Although considered to be the beauty of the family, Anne's personal circumstances were compromised by ill health, since she suffered from epilepsy, referred to by Stuart as 'that terrible infirmity, the falling sickness'.[944] Of Anne's intellectual capacity, Stuart rather damningly writes: 'Physical

[941] Lady Louisa Stuart was the youngest daughter of John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, a first cousin of Lady Anne Campbell. J.A. Home, ed. *Lady Louisa Stuart: Selections from her manuscripts* (Edinburgh, 1899), p.1.

[942] Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart,* p.20.

[943] *Ibid.*, p.23.

[944] Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart,* p.43. Although the condition of epilepsy had been identified by this date, the malady was still little understood. The contemporary physician, Dr John Andree, recommended observation over speculative superstition in treating epileptics. Dr. John Andree, *Cases of the Epilepsy, Hysteric Fits & St Vitus's Dance,* (London, 1746).

causes prematurely weakened her understanding; but I should suppose it could never have ranked above the mediocre'.[945]

While Anne was in receipt of this apparently deficient upbringing, her future husband, William Wentworth, was being raised with his destined role as head of the Strafford family firmly in mind. In 1739, the year of his father's death, he had embarked on his Grand Tour, during which he had acquired a love and knowledge of classical architecture.[946] Unlike his father, who had delayed marrying until he was almost forty, William became engaged when he was only eighteen. It seems likely that his mother, Lady Strafford, would have instilled in him a sense of his responsibilities as the family's only son and heir. Indeed, she may have encouraged him to marry early in the interest of perpetuating the Strafford line. However, since William was still in his minority at the time of his engagement, he had to obtain special permission from parliament to proceed with the marriage.[947] This was duly granted. As the daughter of a Duke, Lady Anne Campbell brought both pedigree and wealth to the union. Her dowry amounted to £10,000, augmenting the already considerable Wentworth and Johnson fortunes inherited by her husband.[948] However, it seems that she had little interest in subsequently exerting any power over either her husband or her domestic environment. According to Stuart, the newly married Lady Anne was like 'an amiable child, looking up to its governor with great respect but some portion of fear, while the

[945] Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart*, p.42.

[946] Wharncliffe, *Letters and works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. 2, p.85: 13 January [1741]: Lady Mary evidently felt that the young Earl had been over-indulged by his mother. After meeting him in Rome, she wrote: '[Lord Strafford] behaves himself really very modestly and genteely and has lost the pertness he acquired in his mother's company.'

[947] *London and Country Journal*, 20 January 1741.

[948] Bedfordshire archive: X949/1: 'Attested copy of the marriage Settlement of Lord Strafford', 25 April 1741.

said governor, *alias* husband, though extremely fond of her, held the reins of authority tight, and would be obeyed.'[949]

Having embarked on her married life with William, Anne appears to have divided her time between their various residences. By this date, the Strafford family had accumulated an extensive portfolio of properties. In addition to the principal family seat at Wentworth Castle, they also owned Friston Hall in Suffolk (inherited from Lady Strafford's father, Henry Johnson) and Boughton Hall in Northamptonshire. However, it seems that Anne particularly enjoyed residing in London, where she could partake of the many entertainments on offer. In a letter written to her fiancé, a few months prior to her marriage, she had enthused: 'London this Winter has been very Gay […] I am very fond of [plays] & have been at severale'.[950] Two of her sisters, Caroline, Lady Dalkeith, and Lady Elizabeth Campbell (later Mackenzie) regularly performed at Queensberry House in those amateur theatricals discussed in chapter 4.

However, it seems that Anne had no inclination to either act or hold amateur theatricals herself. When her cousin, Lady Ailesbury, hosted such a performance, Anne wrote to her husband: 'I wish her well off with it, I should be sorry to have it in my House'.[951] Likewise, she rarely, if ever, presided over grand assemblies in the manner of her mother-in-law. Indeed, there is evidence that Lord Strafford wished to limit his wife's exposure in London society. When justifying his protective behaviour to his friend, Lady Bute, who had witnessed one of Anne's epileptic seizures at a card party, he apparently admitted:

[949] Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart*, p.42.

[950] BL Add MS 72714, f.65: Anne Campbell to William Wentworth, 23 February [1741].

[951] BL Add MS 72714, f.107: Anne Campbell to William Wentworth, n.d.

> I am aware how churlish and tyrannical Lady Strafford's sisters think me for thwarting her inclinations as much as I am forced to do […] but now, when you have seen what her malady is, can you wonder I wish to hinder its being perpetually exposed to the world?[952]

Anne may have enjoyed going to plays and other entertainments in London, despite her husband's concerns, but these activities were conducted in the company of an intimate circle of family members, especially her sisters and sisters-in-law, and close female friends. When William was called away on business, it seems that responsibility for her well-being was primarily entrusted to her mother. Writing from St James's Square during the 1750s, Lady Anne informed her husband: 'My Mother takes the whole & sole possession of me, I have been ask'd to dine in other places but she always claims me, to morrow I have got permission to dine with the Dutchess of Norfolk'.[953] This indicates that Anne willingly accepted this curtailment of her freedom to the extent that she even sought permission before visiting her close neighbour in St James's Square.

Given his apparent inclination to protect his wife from exposure to London society, it is interesting that William decided to embark on a costly scheme to rebuild his London house in the late 1740s. He perhaps felt that the seventeenth-century house acquired by his parents no longer reflected the enhanced wealth and status of the Strafford family. Moreover, like many male aristocrats at the time, he had a keen interest in architecture, having acquired some skill in the art himself.[954] As noted

[952] Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart*, p.44. Lady Bute was Lady Louisa Stuart's mother.

[953] BL Add MS 72714, f.95: Anne Campbell to William Wentworth, n.d. [*c.*1756]

[954] Colvin credits William with designing the south-east wing of Wentworth castle, built between 1759 and 1764. Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary*, p.1038

above, he employed the services of Matthew Brettingham the elder to design and build his house in St James's Square. Described by Howard Colvin as 'an orthodox but unenterprising Palladian', Brettingham was, nevertheless, much sought after by London's fashionable elite.[955] At the same time as working on 5 St James's Square, he was also rebuilding Norfolk House, in the south-east corner of the square, for Edward Howard, 9th Duke of Norfolk. Thomas Bowles's engraving shows that the two houses designed by Brettingham were clearly differentiated from their neighbours by their noble classical facades (1750-60) (fig.5.10). Expanded to five bays in width, the façade of number 5 adopted the typical character of the Palladian town house (figs 5.11 and 5.13). It was still arranged over three principal storeys with a basement below and garrets above, but, in the new building, the windows on the *piano nobile* were adorned with pediments and balustrades, whilst those in the attic storey were square in shape. As is evident from the floor plan, the façade overlooking the square belied the actual width of the building which extended eastwards, to the north of number 4, taking advantage of the additional space provided by the corner site (fig.5.12). The interior plan provided an interconnecting sequence of five rooms on both the ground and first floors, with a great toplit staircase connecting these two levels.

Whilst one might have expected Anne to have been involved with the interior decoration of the house, it seems that this was very much dictated by her husband. The couple's friend, Horace Walpole, credited William with choosing 'all the Ornaments', including the rococo plasterwork in the staircase compartment, and made no mention of his wife in this context. Walpole particularly admired the decorative paintings by Andien de Clermont in the 'eating room', based on Raphael's grotesques in the

[955] Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary*, p.155.

Vatican loggie, which Lord Strafford would have seen on his trip to Rome.[956] Interestingly, de Clermont also decorated Anne's reading closet at Wentworth Castle, suggesting that she may have shared her husband's appreciation of the artist's delicate rococo style.[957] However, the tone of Lady Anne's letters to her husband generally gives the impression that she lacked confidence in her own taste and judgement. For example, when William sent her a fine piece of china as a gift, she confessed that the present would be 'quite thrown away' upon her since she had 'not the least judgement of China'.[958] Anne's lack of apparent involvement in the decoration of her London town house serves as a reminder that some aristocratic women were relatively unengaged with their domestic environment, particularly when a husband assumed a more dominant presence there. Moreover, unlike the first Countess of Strafford, who had set up home in London whilst her husband was working abroad, Anne Campbell was never left to manage the household in London by herself. Her health, combined with an apparently submissive personality and limited education, are all likely to have played a part in this.

There was, however, one aspect of the domestic interior which did greatly interest Anne: her collection of pet birds and animals. Her love of pet-keeping was commented on by both Horace Walpole and Louisa Stuart. The former referred to her affectionately as the 'lady of the menagerie', whilst the latter described her as delighting in animals of every sort and species.[959] Writing from St James's Square in

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[956] H. Walpole, 'Books of Materials', vol. 2, p. 45. I. Roscoe, 'Andien de Clermont: Decorative Painter to the Leicester House Set', *Apollo*, CXXIII, 288 (February 1986), p.100.

[957] Roscoe, 'Andien de Clermont', p.99.

[958] BL Add MS 72714, f.77, 7 December [1740].

[959] Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 35, p.293: Walpole to Earl of Strafford, 9 August 1759. Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart*, p.47.

1756, Anne assured her husband: 'We are all well in this house, myself, servants, Dogs & Birds', revealing that her pets were with her during her periods of residence in London.[960] As noted by Tague, pet-keeping had become increasingly fashionable in elite households over the course of the eighteenth century. Like the display of porcelain and japanned furniture, exotic creatures could function as living demonstrations of British imperial power and wealth.[961] However, it seems likely that Lady Strafford's devotion to her pets helped to distract her from her sadness in having no children of her own. According to Stuart, both William and Anne 'bitterly deplored their ill-fate in being childless'. Whilst he 'longed for heirs', his wife 'pined for playthings'.[962]

William's disappointment over his lack of an heir brings us back to one of the key issues for the Strafford family: patrilineal descent. Whilst the wishes of William's grandmother, Lady Wentworth, had been fulfilled by his own birth in 1722, his death in 1791 (six years after that of his wife), marked the end of the dynastic line. William's title subsequently passed to his second cousin, Frederick Wentworth (1732-99). However, in an interesting turn of events, ownership of the house in St James's Square did not accompany the title. Much to the disappointment of various hopeful nephews, William left 'all his personal and landed estates' (including his town house) to his sister, Lady Anne Conolly, for her life, passing on her death to her grandson, George Byng Jr of Wrotham Park (1764-1847) (fig.5.2).[963] Although Anne herself never

[960] BL Add MS 72714, f.113: Lady Anne Campbell to William Wentworth, n.d. [1756].

[961] I. Tague, *Animal Companions: Pets and Social Change in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), p.53.

[962] Home, *Lady Louisa Stuart*, pp.45-46.

[963] For a full discussion on Anne Conolly's inheritance of the Strafford estates, see A.P.W. Malcomson, 'The Fall of the house of Conolly, 1758-1803' in A. Blackstock and E. Magennis, eds, *Politics and*

returned to live at 5 St James's Square, it remained in her possession until her death in 1797.[964] According to the rate books, her son, Thomas, and his wife, Louisa, were resident at the property from 1792 to 1794, and George Byng, her grandson, then occupied the house from 1795 until 1847.

Conclusion

The lineage family, typically associated with the country house, could also find expression in the town house. Elite women played a crucial role in this context. Under their management, a West End residence could become an important vehicle for parading the wealth and power of the family. Given his diplomatic duties abroad, the 1st Earl of Strafford relied first on his mother, then on his wife to support his interests in London. The former devoted considerable energy to identifying and surveying a suitable town house for her son, recognising such a property's potential to enhance the family's image. The latter ensured that such plans were realised by furnishing and decorating the house in accordance with fashionable taste, so that it became a highly visible statement of the family's rank, status and prosperity. In particular, the ceremonies associated with the lying-in ritual gave Lady Strafford the opportunity to display the newly refurbished interiors of the house to the highest-ranking members of society. Like many elite town houses, including Marlborough House and the Countess of Portland's house in the Privy Garden, 5 St James's Square provided an important

Political Culture in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Essays in Tribute to Peter Jupp (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2007), pp.110-12 and pp.124-26.

[964] After becoming a widow in 1754, Anne Connolly purchased a house in Grosvenor Square. Her death took place there in February 1797. BL Add MS 22254, f.52: Anne Conolly to William, Lord Strafford, 2 August 1754; *True Briton*, 18 February 1797.

hub for members of the extended family. During the first Countess's period of occupancy, the house offered both long and short-term accommodation to members of Lady Strafford's natal family, and several of her in-laws. Later, it became an important setting for raising the couple's four children. As the dynamics of the family changed, so did the function and use of the house in St James's Square.

Inevitably, this thesis has focused on women who demonstrated a considerable level of involvement with their town houses. But, it is valuable to have the opportunity, here, to note that some elite women were relatively uninvolved in the creation and fashioning of the domestic interiors in which they lived, and deferred to their husbands. This was certainly the case with the second Countess of Strafford, Lady Anne Campbell, who adopted a far more submissive role than her mother-in-law in relation to the decoration and management of the house. Finally, this case study has underlined the importance of female inheritance in relation to the fortunes of a noble family. Despite the combined efforts of Lady Wentworth and Lady Strafford to protect the patriarchy through commitment to their sons, William and his wife were childless. However, the Strafford lineage was ultimately preserved through the descendants of William's sister, Anne Conolly. In 1847, one of her grandsons, John Byng, was created Earl of Strafford of the third creation. John's son, George Stevens Byng, 2nd Earl of Strafford (1806-86), subsequently inherited 5 St James's Square from his uncle, thereby restoring the association between this town house and the earldom of Strafford.

Conclusion

> To be sold by Auction […]: The Capital Dwelling House and all the Furniture and Fixtures thereto belonging, late the property of the Right Hon the Lady Isabella Finch, deceased, delightfully situated in Berkeley Square. The Plan was by Mr Kent and for Taste, Elegance and Strength is exceeded by none and equalled but by few. Containing a good hall at entrance, an inner ditto, an elegant and matchless stone staircase, a capital Salon room greatly enriched with Paintings in compartment, ornamented with gold.[965]

This auction notice, published in the *Public Advertiser* in April 1771, appeared almost a year after the death of Lady Isabella Finch. However, the identification of the building's late owner in the opening sentence reveals the extent to which the reputation of 44 Berkeley Square was dependent on its patron and former owner. In the opening to this thesis, it was noted that, whilst scholars have repeatedly celebrated this building for its spatial trickery and ingenious design, the motivation and concerns of its patron have largely been ignored, some scholars even going so far as to suggest that Lady Isabella failed to either appreciate or make proper use of her house.[966] As indicated by this auction notice, and confirmed by Lady Isabella's prolific correspondence, such an assumption could not be further from the truth. Like many women of her class, Lady Isabella was an active participant in the elite social and political life of the capital and her house in Berkeley Square provided an appropriate stage on which to perform this role. This thesis has drawn extensively on private correspondence and evidence from newspaper reports to explore the relationship between women and their residences in

[965] *Public Advertiser*, 11 April 1771.

[966] Wilson, *William Kent*, p.229.

London in greater depth. It has been possible to show that the history of the West End town house is inextricably interwoven with the lives of elite women. Their roles as patrons and inhabitants must therefore be carefully examined if we are to gain a full and nuanced understanding of the London houses of the early Georgian period.

It was noted in the introduction to this thesis that the town house in general has received far less scholarly attention than the country house, so it is perhaps not surprising that the subsidiary question of the relationship of women with the town house has been largely overlooked. There appear to be two key reasons for neglect of these properties: First, their widespread demolition has resulted in many such buildings being forgotten. Second, the town house's perceived lack of stylistic individuality, relative to the country house, has rendered it less appealing to historians. As noted by the eighteenth-century writer, Isaac Ware, it was only in the country that the architect was left to the 'free use of his fancy; for in London all is restrained'.[967] The town house was far more integrated into the urban landscape. Even a palatial residence, such as Marlborough House, cannot be fully assessed in isolation, but must be understood in relation to its neighbouring buildings. As argued in chapter 1, the style and significance of this property owed much to its proximity to St James's Palace. Meanwhile, terraced houses such as 5 St James's Square constitute one piece of a greater formal construct, and, as such, need to be interpreted as part of a larger social setting.

However, that the town house was part of the wider urban fabric of London arguably opened up more opportunities for elite women, especially in comparison with their relative isolation on the country estate. All the houses considered in this thesis

[967] I. Ware, *A Complete Body of Architecture* (London, 1756), p.299.

were located within a short distance of one another and in close proximity to the royal court and Parliament. Thus, to understand women's roles in the context of their London residences, we have to assess how their daily lives and concerns tessellated with those of others living in the West End. With all the women examined in this thesis, it has been my aim to consider them, not in isolation, but in relation to their peers.

In view of these concerns, this thesis has adopted three different lenses to fully evaluate the diversity of women's roles in relation to the town house: the biographical case study; the study of a geographical area; and the examination of a town house across three generations of the same family. The first two chapters focused on the roles of two patrons, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and Mary, 8th Duchess of Norfolk, both of whom commissioned prestigious architects to build them bespoke town houses. It was shown that these women presided over every stage in the design and construction of their homes. This involved close collaboration with their chosen architects and careful scrutiny of architectural drawings to ensure that their houses were built and embellished in accordance with their requirements. Furthermore, the decoration and furnishing of the interiors offered both women the opportunity to liaise with leading craftsmen and to express their wealth, taste and personal connections. These two chapters also considered how these buildings functioned for their female owners; how they enhanced their status and facilitated their lifestyle. In the case of Marlborough House, we looked at the relationship between its design and decoration and the Duchess's changing personal and political circumstances between 1708, when the house was first conceived, and 1714, when its mural scheme was completed. Similarly, we saw how the secluded setting and interior arrangement of the Duchess of

Norfolk's house in Arlington Street sheds a revealing light on her personal and political ambitions.

Following these two detailed case studies, chapters 3 and 4 broadened the lens to examine two residential districts of the West End: Whitehall and the Burlington estate. From this new perspective it was possible to draw attention to women's roles in shaping the built environment and defining the social character of each locality. Conversely, this approach also facilitated an understanding of the neighbourhood's role in framing the lives of its female residents. Contrary to frequently held assumptions about male dominance over urban property, my research has highlighted a significant number of female property holders in each of the localities studied. On the Whitehall site, these women had to navigate the difficulties associated with occupying crown land, including the challenges of maintaining dilapidated palace buildings and disputes over boundaries, even if this meant resorting to the expense of litigation. Women also played an important role in fashioning the characters of these neighbourhoods. In chapter 4, we saw how the dowager Countess of Burlington, Juliana, and her daughter-in-law, Dorothy, encouraged a climate at Burlington House in which artists, musicians and writers could live on an almost equal footing with their patrons. This in turn came to influence various women living on the estate, including the Duchess of Queensberry, who invited the playwright, John Gay, to take up residence in her house, and the Countess of Huntington, who formed a close personal relationship with William Kent. Social networks were thus interwoven with the artistic community, with the estate providing a platform for London's emerging creative scene.

The examination of these two neighbourhoods also drew attention to the town house's role in strengthening kinship networks and forging friendships in the locality.

Women typically had more leisure time at their disposal than their male counterparts. By focusing on their daily lives, we saw how they played a crucial role in the social life of the city by giving and receiving visits, supporting family members during childbirth or illness, and by strategic socialising aimed at promoting the careers and interests of their male relatives. Whilst women who preferred to remain on the country estate tended to be more limited in their social activities, those more fully based in London's West End could realise such ambitions.

For the final chapter in this study, the lens changed again, to examine the relationship between the women of the Wentworth family and their town house in St James's Square across an extended time period, spanning three different generations. Unlike the country house – an emblem of land ownership, supposed to be passed from generation to generation through the male line – a town house was typically either rented or owned on a leasehold basis, and so was often associated with the life of an individual.[968] However, my study of 5 St James's Square showed that it could, in fact, play an important role in relation to noble families. It could do so symbolically, by enhancing the status of the family's lineage, but also practically, by supporting or accommodating members of the extended family. The elite London household was typically in flux. Whilst the women of the Wentworth family were fully invested in, and supportive of patriarchal power, they each shaped their own identity within that model. This chapter drew attention to the vital role such mothers, wives and sisters played in promoting the wealth and reputation of the family from their base in London.

Throughout this study it has been clear that residence in the West End opened up a myriad of opportunities for elite women. Letters frequently make reference to the

[968] Stewart, *Town House,* pp.56-57.

richness of London's social life. Writing to her sister in May 1728, Mary Delany commented: 'London is so full of entertainment that if I lived a polite life I should not have a moment my own.'[969] Residence in the capital brought the opportunity to participate in social and political networks, to sample the rich cultural life of the city, to attend the royal court and to strengthen kinship connections with other family members, whether living in town, or passing through. However, a house in the West End was not merely a convenient base from which to take advantage of the capital's attractions. During the season, it was constantly on display, its interiors indicating the owner's status, connections, prosperity and taste. After visiting the newly married Lady Sunderland in her new house in George Street, Delany commented: 'I hope she will be very happy: I think there is a great appearance of her being so: her house is charmingly furnished with pictures, glasses, tapestry and damask, all super fine in their kind.'[970] This reveals the extent to which material display was associated not only with prosperity but also with the well-being of the house's mistress.

Elite women were deeply conscious of the requirement to maintain the appropriate level of display. Too little, and they could arouse suspicions of dwindling family fortunes. Too much, and they could be accused of extravagance, or even vulgarity. As noted by Ingrid Tague, such women thus 'walked a fine line between the imperatives of conspicuous display and the pervasive moral critique of such display.'[971] Even for a woman as wealthy and high-ranking as the Duchess of Marlborough, the requirement to avoid accusations of excessive expenditure was a

[969] Llanover, *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville*, vol.1, p.172: Mrs Pendarves to Anne Granville, 11 May 1728.

[970] *Ibid.*, p.100: Mrs Pendarves to Mrs Anne Granville, 12 December 1724. Judith (née Titchborne), Lady Sunderland, was the widow of Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland.

[971] Tague, *Women of Quality*, p.140.

persistent concern. Her contemporary, the Countess of Strafford, likewise took pains to justify her expenditure on the house, whilst Lady Irwin was apparently criticised by her second husband for overspending on her house in New Burlington Street.[972] This shows that even the most high-ranking women were strongly influenced by expectations of female behaviour as disseminated in the prescriptive literature of the period.

Such women were constantly exposed to potential criticism from their contemporaries. In contrasting the customs of Venice with those of London, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu commented: 'It is so much the established fashion for everybody to live in their own way, that nothing is more ridiculous than censuring the actions of another. This would be terrible in London where we have little other diversion.'[973] However, it is of course precisely such gossip in letters which provides a valuable insight into the social mores of the period, especially with regard to the expectations of female behaviour. The Countess of Strafford was quick to criticise the undisciplined household of her sister-in-law, Lady Arundell, in Arlington Street, whilst Lady Burlington commented wryly on the Duchess of Queensberry's habit of entertaining royal visitors dressed as a milkmaid. This reveals the extent to which aristocratic women judged one another as both hostesses and housekeepers. However, many of these women were also tied by strong bonds of friendship. Juliana, Countess dowager of Burlington, almost certainly took inspiration from her friend, the Duchess of Marlborough, in her own role as an architectural patron, whilst a shared interest in

[972] HMC *Manuscripts of the Marquess Townshend* (London, 1887), p.248: Elizabeth Compton to Lady Northampton, 2 July 1737.

[973] Wharncliffe, *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol.2, p.49: Lady Mary to Countess of Pomfret, 6 November 1739.

the arts united several of the women on the Burlington estate including the Duchess of Queensberry, the Countess of Harold and the Countess of Suffolk.

Another important theme of this thesis has been the relationship of the town house to the royal court. The experiences of the women examined here support the research of both Hannah Smith and Clarissa Campbell Orr in showing that the royal court continued to hold social and political influence in this period. Several of the women in this study served as courtiers at some point in their lives and their relationships with monarchs often had a direct impact on their living arrangements. Whilst those in favour were often awarded luxurious lodgings within the royal palace, their position was precarious. The Duchess of Marlborough was stripped of her offices and apartments as a result of her dispute with Queen Anne. However, she had been granted a lease on a plot of land in the gardens of St James's Palace on which to construct her own grand mansion, and the location and architectural resonance of that house with the palace proffered a continued link between the Marlboroughs and the monarchy. Meanwhile, Lady Wentworth also lost her lodgings in St James's Palace to the Duke of Gloucester but was granted alternative accommodation in the Cockpit at Whitehall. The entitlement to occupy such property on crown land typically persisted after courtiers had retired from royal service as seen in the case of the Countess of Portland who continued to reside in the Privy Garden even when she had ceased to serve as the royal governess. The Duchess of Marlborough, ever mindful to downplay the bounty she had received from Queen Anne, claimed that her house was 'rather a

prejudice than any advantage to the Duke of Marlborough's family since after so great a sum of money pay'd for it, it must return to the Crown in a few years'.[974]

The absence of a grand palace in London meant that the monarch was often reliant on the houses of his or her courtiers for hosting important entertainments, helping to ensure that an appropriate degree of pageantry was associated with royal celebrations. Not only did the activities of the court spill over into the town house, but also those of parliament. As noted in my introduction, much valuable research has been carried out in relation to women's political activities in the second half of the eighteenth century, but the case studies examined here reveal that women were also active agents in the febrile political climate of the century's earlier decades.[975] In the case of the Duchess of Marlborough, it seems that her zealous support of the Whig party was a major factor in her ambitions for her town house. After many of her political ambitions had been thwarted, following the dismissal of both herself and her husband from court, she transformed three prominent spaces in Marlborough House with a mural scheme, showing the Duke in the heat of battle, reminding the onlooker of his sacrifices on behalf of the nation. Whilst the Duchess of Marlborough was inclined to write extensive accounts justifying her behaviour, the Duchess of Norfolk presents a far more shadowy figure. It has been suggested in this thesis, based on her personal history, that her town house provided an important venue for Jacobite activity. Until further evidence comes to light, this will remain a matter of speculation. However, women's roles as Jacobite hostesses is an area deserving of further scholarship.

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[974] BL Add MS 61425, f.98: An Account of the Duchess of Marlborough's Conduct at Court, 1713-14, f.98.

[975] See especially Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*; Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*.

Politics infused elite social activity in the period. Nearly all the women examined in this thesis were involved in politics at some level. In particular, we have seen how the rift between George II and Prince Frederick led to a division in the royal court, with the opposition party rallying around the heir to the throne. It has been suggested that those living in the Whitehall area were more likely to profess loyalty to the King. Indeed, if they did otherwise, they risked losing their lodgings or leaseholds as in the case of John Gay. Meanwhile, residents of the Burlington estate tended to display a greater level of independence from the King's authority. In both defending Gay and subsequently inviting him to live with her at Queensberry House, the Duchess of Queensberry was openly rebelling against the King. Over the ensuing months, she assumed a role directly opposed to the artifice of the court, especially in her style of dress, as noted above. However, like many of her fellow aristocrats on the Burlington estate, her strategic entertaining of Frederick, the heir to the throne, shows that even the most rebellious aristocrats recognised the value and importance of royal connection.

In certain cases, elite women could play important roles as peace makers between their male kin and members of the royal family. Dorothy, Lady Burlington, maintained her position as lady of the bedchamber to Queen Caroline even after her husband had resigned from his position as a courtier. Meanwhile, the Countess of Strafford appears to have courted the favour of Caroline (then Princess of Wales), after her husband had been accused of illegal activity by George I's government. I have also suggested that Mary, dowager Duchess of Norfolk, was able to obtain a pardon for her lover, Peregrine Widdrington, based on her diplomatic relationship with Queen Caroline. Crucially, residence in London provided these women with access to the royal court, facilitating such political and diplomatic roles.

A major concern of all the chapters in this thesis has been to examine women's relationship with the town house in relation to different stages in the lifecycle. Some of the women examined here set up home in London after their marriages, including the Duchess of Queensberry and the Countess of Strafford. Having acquired a fashionable residence, they quickly established themselves as prominent society hostesses. Whilst the financial transactions relating to home improvements were typically conducted in a husband's name, it was often the wife who oversaw such projects. In particular, the case of Lady Strafford provides an illuminating example of a newly married woman devoting considerable time and attention to the decoration and embellishment of her town house. Such women appear to have favoured life in London over time spent on the family estate. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu made a revealing observation when she suggested that life in the town was more conducive to marital happiness than confinement in the country: 'Very few people that have settled entirely in the country, but have grown at length weary of one another. The lady's conversation generally falls into a thousand impertinent effects of idleness; and the gentleman falls in love with his dogs and horses and out of love with everything else.'[976]

The findings of this study have also contributed to scholarship examining the condition of elite widowhood.[977] Some of the women discussed in this thesis, who were widowed at a relatively young age, inherited their marital home in London on the death of their husbands. They include Elizabeth Dunch, Charlotte Boscawen and the twenty-year-old Mary, Countess of Harold. For these women, the desire to spend time in the town houses which they had occupied as married women indicates their

[976] Wharncliffe, *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol.1, p.195: Lady Mary to Mr Wortley Montagu, August 1712.

[977] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*; Stewart, *Town House*, pp.38-9, 48-9, 195-6.

eagerness to maintain the status and lifestyle they had hitherto enjoyed. Elizabeth Dunch made several improvements to her home in Scotland Yard during her forty-year widowhood. Conversely, her sister, Charlotte Boscawen, was eventually forced to leave her Whitehall home on account of her financial difficulties. Some women, who were obliged to vacate their town house on the death of their husband, then purchased or commissioned a new property. The Countess of Portland, having lost her lodgings in Whitehall to her stepson, petitioned the King for the lease on a property located next door to her former London home. She was most likely eager to consolidate her position as a trusted courtier, connected to one of the country's leading families. Meanwhile, the Duchess of Norfolk moved out of the town house which she had shared with her husband in St James's Square when the couple separated in 1730. However, she later took advantage of her financial independence to create an exceptionally fine town house in Arlington Street.

Besides wishing to partake in the entertainments and social opportunities of the West End, many widows chose to base themselves in London with an eye to promoting the status and fortune of their families. In the case of Juliana, dowager Countess of Burlington, widowhood enabled her to indulge her architectural ambitions for Burlington House, since they were carried out with a view to enhancing the reputation of the earldom and preparing a stage for her son's future role as a leading patron of the arts. Meanwhile Lady Wentworth, perhaps the most self-deprecating of the women discussed in this thesis, was willing to sacrifice her jointure in the interests of promoting her son's fortunes. However, rather than retreating to a secluded life as a widow, she remained in her lodging in Whitehall, devoting herself to the task of finding both a wife and a suitable town house for her son. After his marriage, she transferred her attention to supporting her daughter-in-law and caring for her

grandchildren. Both the Duchess of Marlborough and the Countess of Portland evidently valued the independence and financial autonomy associated with widowhood. Moreover, ongoing residence in town gave them the opportunity to exert a considerable degree of control over the lives of their adult children and grandchildren.

Such evidence supports research by historians including Tague and Kate Retford that elite women were embedded in patriarchy, often prioritising the interests of the male line. Even an unmarried and seemingly independent-minded woman, such as Lady Isabella Finch, referred to her father in almost reverential terms. When reminding her brother-in-law of his obligations as a trustee of the family estate, she wrote: 'that great and good man with prudence and foresight so intailed and tied up [his estate] that no one of his sons should be able to do as they pleased with any part of it'.[978] In her own will, she left the house to her brother, Edward, most likely hoping that it would pass through his family, and follow patrilineal descent, in the manner of the country house. However, there were some exceptions. As we saw in chapter 2, Mary, dowager Duchess of Norfolk, with no surviving close relatives, chose to leave her town house to her friend, William Gage.

Another important focus of this study has been the versatile and adaptable nature of the town house. It could function as both informal living space and as a more formal setting for ceremonial events surrounding marriage, childbirth and death. Women evidently played a crucial role as participants in and/or orchestrators of such rituals. In the case of the Duchess of Marlborough, she arranged for at least three of her granddaughters to be married at Marlborough House, its grand interiors providing

[978] SCA, WWM M2/447: Lady Isabella to Lord Rockingham, 18 October 1747.

the setting for both their marriage ceremonies and their wedding banquets. As frequently noted in this thesis, such events were widely publicised in daily newspaper reports. The daughters of both the Duke and Duchess of Richmond and Henry Pelham were also married in their parents' town houses in the Privy Garden and Arlington Street respectively.[979]

The staging of such ceremonies in a domestic setting also contributes to scholarship that has undercut the notion of the town house as an exclusively private space.[980] This is particularly true of the performative rituals surrounding childbirth and death which took place there. As discussed in chapter 5, the preparations for the birth of the Countess of Strafford's first child provides a highly illuminating example of how a house's interiors could be adapted to accommodate the lying-in ritual. The many letters written by the Countess to her husband during her pregnancy underscore the importance she attached to decorating and furnishing various rooms in preparation for the birth. Unlike the country house, the town house could easily facilitate visits from other high-ranking members of society. By opting to give birth in London, elite women not only accessed the best medical care, but also drew attention to the strength of their growing dynasties.

This fluid interplay between public and private space in the interior of the town house is fully played out in the ritual of lying-in state. As my research has shown, this ceremony persisted well into the eighteenth century in aristocratic circles. The body of the 8th Duchess of Norfolk lay in state in Arlington Street for several days after her

[979] *London Evening Post*, 7-10 February 1747; *Penny London Post or the Morning Advertiser*, 12-15 October 1744.

[980] Heller, 'Leisure and the Use of Domestic Space in Georgian London'; Jenkins and Newman, 'A House Divided'; S. Brooke, 'The Display and Reception of Private Picture Collections in London Town Houses, 1780-1830' in Avery-Quash and Retford, *Georgian London Town House*, pp.149-169.

death, whilst that of Lady Rawstorne lay in state in the parlour of 5 St James's Square. In the case of the Duke of Marlborough, who enjoyed an exceptionally high public profile, his widow orchestrated a ritualistic procession through a sequence of interior spaces in Marlborough House, so that visitors could pay their final respects to her husband. The detail of the account in the *Daily Journal*, amounting to several paragraphs, reveals the extent to which these mourning rituals captured the public imagination.[981] Nor were such ceremonies limited to the elite. The Duchess was also willing to honour her chief steward by arranging for him to lie in state in the hallway of Marlborough House in 1730.[982]

As noted in the introduction, my preparatory research for this thesis involved identifying as many women as I could find (who were involved in either building or decorating a residence in London) before selecting the case studies for each chapter. Inevitably there are several elite women, identified during this process, who merit further investigation. Katherine, Lady Pelham is one such example. As the wife of the Prime Minister, Henry Pelham, she lived in three different properties in London, including 32 Old Burlington Street, a residence in the Horseguards, Whitehall, and a magnificent house in Arlington Street, designed by William Kent. After becoming a widow, she engaged in a building project of her own, remodelling a large property in the Privy Garden, Whitehall. Whilst it is known that she performed the role of a political hostess there, so far very little material has come to light documenting her experiences.[983]

[981] *Daily Journal*, 13 August 1722

[982] *Evening Post*, 5-8 September 1730.

[983] *SoL*, vol.13, pp.140-44.

Another prominent woman not included in this study, owing to its necessarily limited scope, is Henrietta Fermor, Countess of Pomfret (1698-1761). She commissioned an unusual gothic-style town house in Arlington Street, built between 1757 and 1760. Not surprisingly, this building is often considered primarily as a stylistic anomaly yet, in commissioning this house, the Countess shared many of the preoccupations of her peers. Like the Duchess of Norfolk's house on the same street, Henrietta's residence was preceded by a gateway, leading into a forecourt. The house itself was set well back, enjoying uninhibited views over the park. Few, if any, scholars have considered the Countess's motivation for building 'Pomfret Castle' beyond her desire to 'stand out from the crowd' in stylistic terms.[984] Crucially, it was located next door to the house of her widowed son-in-law, John Carteret, 2nd Earl Granville, and her granddaughter, Sophia. It thus seems likely that the house was conceived with a view to Henrietta fulfilling her duty as an attentive grandmother to the motherless Sophia (1754-71).[985]

I hope that this thesis will encourage and facilitate further research to uncover the rich histories behind prominent women and their London houses. Restoring women to their rightful place in the history of the West End town house has been one aim of this study. Another has been emphasising the importance of adopting a multi-disciplinary approach when considering women's involvement with architecture and urban space. Expanding the (more traditional) biographical case study in both space and time provides a far deeper insight into the multi-faceted nature of women's roles,

[984] S. Freeman, 'An Englishwoman's Home is Her Castle: Lady Pomfret's House at 18 Arlington Street', *The Georgian Group Journal*, 20 (2012), pp.87-101.

[985] See Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors,* pp.145-56. Sophia was later to become a prominent patron of Robert Adam as the wife of William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne.

bringing new angles to historical debates and challenging existing conceptions. As this thesis has shown, the study of elite women's experiences can transform our understanding of the essential role played by the West End town house in shaping early eighteenth-century London society.

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L/73/5: Counterpart lease of a piece of Ground in New Burlington Street, 29 January 1735.

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Correspondence of Edward Weld

D–WLC/C/20: Letter from Mary (née Shireburne), Dowager Duchess of Norfolk to Edward Weld of Lulworth Castle, 30 August 1750.

East Sussex Record Office (ESRO)

SAS/G 50/17/108: Inventory of the goods in Lord Gage's House, Arlington Street, December 7th, 1791.

Hertfordshire Record Office (HRO)

Panshanger MSS, D/E F.63: Correspondence of Lady Cowper

Panshanger MSS, D/E F.228. Family Volume including copies of letters from Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.

Lancashire Record Office, Preston (LRO)

DDSt Weld (Shireburne) of Stonyhurst

Miscellaneous family papers

Box 87:

f.12: The Duke of Norfolk's Discharge and Release to the Representatives of the Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk for several Jewels and pieces of Plate, 8 February 1755.

Box 92:

f.3: Letter from Edward Bradley to Peregrine Widdrington, 26 October 1736.

f.6: A catalogue of books belonging to Her Grace ye Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk.

Box 94:

f.1: Bill for the wedding meals of Mary Shireburn at her marriage to the Duke of Norfolk, 26 May 1709.

f.2: The Estate of the Most Noble Mary, late Dutchess Dowger of Norfolk to Mr George Wilmot in respect of Sevl. Debts by him paid which were due and owing from the said late Dutchess at the time of her Decease.

f.5: List of Workmen.

f.6: A Computation of Her Grace's Funeral.

Box 96:

f.14: List of Silver Plate bequeathed to Thomas Gage, 1754.

f.21: 'Account of ye yearly Expences & outgoings', 1744.

Box 97:

f. 23: Correspondence relating to imprisonment of Duke of Norfolk in Tower, 8 Oct 1722 to 25 May 1723, Duchess of Norfolk to Lord Carlisle, n.d.

Box 98:

f.26: Opinion on Norfolk Marriage Settlement, 20 December 1729.

f.32: Legal opinion on the estate of Mary, Dutchess of Norfolk, 30 December 1729.

Box 100:

f.14: George Wilmot's bill relating to the Estate of Mary, late Duchess Dowager of Norfolk, 25 September 1754 to 12 February 1756.

Box 114:

f.60: Articles of agreement between Mrs Delariviere Gage and Mary, Dutchess of Norfolk, 25 May 1733.

Box 115:

f.15: Duplicate of Codicil to the Will of Mary, Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, 8 August 1750.

f.18: Will of Peregrine Widdrington 1747.

f.21: Abstract of will and codicils of Mary, Dowager Duchess of Norfolk 1749.

Box 120

f.1: Agreement between Mary Norfolk and James Gibbs.

f.2: Memorandum of Thomas Michener, n.d.

f.7: Release to John Gage of Harleston from Christopher Davenport, 1687.

f.9: Release from Sir Thomas Gage Baronet to her Grace Dutchess Dowager of Norfolk, 6 February 1733 [1734 *NS*].

Lancashire, Stonyhurst College Archive

Shireburn Papers

C.1.10 Sir Nicholas Shireburn Accounts with Goldsmith, 1690–1717.

1.C. Letters of Wm. Hathornthwaite (agent/steward at Stonyhurst) to Mary, Duchess of Norfolk, 26 September 1732.

London, British Library

Add MS 22067, f.254, Lady Isabella Finch to the Duke of Newcastle, 5 January 1761.

Add MS 32733, f.192: Lady Isabella Finch to the Duke of Newcastle, 3 November 1753.

Add MS 4805: Letters from John Gay to Jonathan Swift, 1714–32.

RP 8309/2: Copy of a letter to an unknown recipient, signed by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 12 August 1733.

Althorp Papers

Add MS 75355: 1664–1682: Family correspondence. Letters from Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, and his wife Henrietta, to her parents, Lord and Lady Burlington.

Add MS 75358: 1721–1805: Correspondence and papers of Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington.

Add MS 78026: Inventories of the furniture, household goods and paintings at Althorp, with shorter lists of paintings at Wimbledon House and plate at Marlborough House, belonging to John Spencer; 1746.

Blenheim Papers

Add MS 61357: Correspondence, particularly with Sir Christopher Wren and his son, accounts, estimates, and narratives of the Duchess, relating to the building and furnishing of Marlborough House; 1710–1715.

Add MS 61422: A series of narratives and open letters by the Duchess, chiefly describing episodes in her own and her family's loss of royal favour; [1709?]–[1712?], with a few later additions.

Add MS 61425: Vindication concerning the Duchess's conduct in financial matters and her loss of favour… c.1713–17.

Add MS 61436: Correspondence and papers of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 1712–1725.

Add MS 61441: Correspondence and papers of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 1702–1745.

Add MS 61450: Correspondence and papers of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 1697–1743.

Add MS 61451: Papers relating to the ‘Green Book’ comprising narratives by the Duchess concerning her quarrels with her children, 1722–44.

Add MS 61456: ff.86-110b: Letters from Juliana Boyle to Duchess of Marlborough.

Add MS 61473: Inventory of Blenheim Palace and Marlborough House, 1740.

Add MS 61459–61461: Letters from Arthur Maynwaring to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, 1707–1712.

Add MS 62569: Letters from Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough to Robert Jennens, 1707–1714.

Egerton Papers

Egerton MS 1712: Letters to the Countess Dowager of Portland principally from her son, William, Count Bentinck of Holland, 1732–1751.

Egerton MS 1715–1716: Letters from the Countess of Portland to her son, William, Count Bentinck, during different periods of the years 1730–51.

Egerton MS 1721–1722: William Bentinck, Count, Correspondence with his family and others in England, 1730–65.

Egerton MS 1973 Tradesmen’s and other accounts of Charlotte, wife of Edward Rich, Earl of Warwick and Holland, and afterwards of Joseph Addison, with inventories of her household goods at her decease, 1704–1799.

Egerton MS 1974 Original Correspondence of John Bridgeman, bart, executor of the will of Charlotte, Countess of Warwick, 1731–[1743].

Egerton Ch 110: Lease between Countess of Portland and Lord Trevor, 1726.

Evelyn Papers

Evelyn MS 78469, f.22: Lady Henrietta Godolphin to Lady Evelyn, 19 June 1718.

Evelyn MS 78530: Letters to Mrs Boscawen…, 1678–1726.

Stowe

Stowe MS 412: 'THE PRACTISING ATTORNEY, or Conveyancer's Guide, being a compleat Collection of the best Modern Presidents for ye greatest part of the Conveying Business…', 1738–1739

Wentworth

Add MS 22225: Letters from Lady Isabella Wentworth to her son, Thomas Wentworth.

Add MS 22226: Letters for Lady Anne Strafford to her husband, Thomas Wentworth.

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C 11/500/19: Viscount Falmouth v Dunch, 1730.

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E 367/3996: Lease to Hugh Boscawen for messuages in Cockpit at Whitehall, 1717.

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E367/5102: Charlotte, Dowager, Viscountess Torrington, the Privy Gardens in Whitehall, 32 Geo II.

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MFC 1/155/53–56: Plan of a piece of land in the Privy Garden, Whitehall occupied by the Countess of Portland, 1744.

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APPENDIX I: WOMEN ASSOCIATED WITH PROPERTIES IN THE WEST END OF LONDON REFERENCED IN THIS THESIS

This table is intended to support the text. It presents the names, titles and dates of the women discussed in the text in a tabular form for ease of reference.

Name	**Title**	**London address / addresses**	**Dates of residence**
Charlotte **Addison** (née Myddleton) 1680-1731	Countess of Warwick	33 Old Burlington Street	1721-31
Frances **Arundell** (née Manners) *c.*1711-1769	Lady Arundell	34 Old Burlington Street 29 Old Burlington Street (also known as General Wade's house)	1732-49 1749-69 (as a widow from 1759)
Jane Martha **Bentinck** (née Temple), 1672-1751	Countess of Portland	Privy Garden, Whitehall	1718-51
Margaret **Bentinck** (née Harley), 1715-85	Duchess of Portland	Portland House, Privy Garden, Whitehall	1734-85 (as a widow from 1761)
Charlotte **Boscawen** (née Godfrey), *c.*1680-1754	Viscountess Falmouth Lady Falmouth	Residence adjoining Holbein Gate, Whitehall	1716-43 (as a widow from 1734)
Dorothy **Boyle** (née Savile), 1699-1758	Countess of Burlington	Burlington House, Piccadilly 1 Savile Street	1721-53 1756-58 (as a widow)
Juliana **Boyle** (née Noel) 1672-1750	Countess of Burlington	Burlington House, Piccadilly Residence in Pall Mall	1704-*c.*1721

Sarah **Churchill** (née Jennyns) 1660-1744	Duchess of Marlborough	Marlborough House, Pall Mall	1711-44
Edith **Colledge**	Mrs Colledge	Apartment near Cockpit, Whitehall House adjoining Holbein Gate, Whitehall	?-1733 1733-43
Catherine (née Hyde) **Douglas**, 1701-77	Duchess of Queensberry	Queensberry House, Burlington Gardens	1720-77
Elizabeth **Dunch** (née Godfrey) c.1685-1761	Mrs Dunch	Scotland Yard	1708-61 (as a widow from 1719)
Lavinia **Fenton** 1710-60	Mrs Fenton	Cork Street 18 New Bond Street	1728-31 1731-34
Lady Isabella **Finch** 1700-71	Lady Isabella	44 Berkeley Square	1745-71
Arabella **Godfrey** (née Churchill) 1648-1730	Mrs Godfrey	St James's Square Scotland Yard	1675-78 1698-1730
Mary **Grey** (née Tufton) 1701-85	Countess of Harold	9 Clifford Street	1721-37 (as a widow from 1723)

Selina **Hasting**s (née Shirley) 1707-1791	Countess of Huntingdon	2 Savile Street Park Street, Westminster	1734-40
Lady Mary **Hervey** (née Lepell) 1700-1768	Lady Hervey	31 Old Burlington Street	1725-30
Mary **Howard** (née Shireburne) 1692-1754	8th Duchess of Norfolk	St James's Square 16 Arlington Street (as a widow)	1722-30 1739-54
Mary **Howard** (née Blount), c.1702-1773	9th Duchess of Norfolk	St James's Square	1732-73
Henrietta **Howard** (née Hobart) 1689-1767	Countess of Sussex	15 Savile Street	1735-67
Anne **Ingram** (née Howard), 1696-1764	Viscountess Irwin Or Lady Irwin	5 New Burlington Street (interior designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor)	1737-64
Catherine **Sheffield** (née Darnley) 1680-1743	Duchess of Buckingham	Buckingham House, St James's Park	1705-43
Adelhida **Talbot** (née Paleotti) 1660-1726	Duchess of Shrewsbury	Warwick House, Charing Cross	*c.*1711-1726 (as a widow from 1718)

Isabella **Wentworth** (née Apsley) c.1647-1743	Lady Wentworth	Lodging in Cockpit, Whitehall	1698-1722
Anne **Wentworth** (née Johnson) c.1684-1754	1st Countess of Strafford	5 St James's Square	1711-41
Anne **Wentworth** (née Campbell) c.1720-85	2nd Countess of Strafford	5 St James's Square	1741-85

APPENDIX II

Women associated with town houses in eighteenth-century London not discussed in this thesis but identified as meriting further research.

Name	Title if applicable	London address / addresses	Dates of residence
Frances **Boscawen** (née Glanville) 1719-1805		14 South Audley Street	*c.*1761-1805
Elizabeth **Chudleigh** 1720-88	Duchess of Kingston	Hill Street	1753-57
Charlotte **Cornwallis** (née Butler) 1679-1725	Dowager Lady Cornwallis	Old Bond Street	?-1725
Mary **Delany** (née Granville) 1700-88		25 St James's Place	*c.*1771-88
Anne **Drelincourt** c.1709-75	Lady Primrose	Essex Street, The Strand	*c.*1750
Henrietta Louisa **Fermor** (née Jeffrys), 1698-1761	Countess of Pomfret	18 Arlington Street	*c.*1760-61
Elizabeth **Greville** (née Hamilton) 1720-1800	Countess of Warwick	Mansfield Street (house designed by Robert Adam)	1775-1800

Lady Mary **Hervey** (née Lepell) 1700-1768	Lady Hervey	25 St James's Place (designed by Henry Flitcroft)	1759-68
Isabella **Montagu** (née Montagu) 1706-86	Duchess of Manchester	Dover Street	1744-86
Katherine **Pelham** (née Manners) 1700/01-80	Lady Pelham	32 Old Burlington Street Horseguards, Whitehall 22 Arlington Street Privy Garden, Whitehall (as a widow)	1726-32 1732-39 *c.*1748-54 1755-80
Anne **Villiers** (née Egerton) 1705-62	Lady Jersey	Pall Mall	1733-?
Etheldreda **Townshend** (nee Harrison) c.1708-88	Viscountess Townshend	4 Whitehall Yard (later 1 Horseguards Avenue)	*c.*1745-88